

# THE LANSING PLAN

A COMPREHENSIVE  
CITY PLAN REPORT  
for  
LANSING MICHIGAN

1921

By Harland Bartholomew

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CITY PLAN REPORT

*for*

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By  
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW  
*City Plan Reporter  
San Francisco, California*

A comprehensive plan for Lansing must lay down broad principles and policies that will guide, but not necessarily hamper, a growing city. Where details have been worked out in this plan, they should be taken as suggestions rather than final plans.

To meet the growing demands of Lansing will require the constant attention of a City Plan Commission, and it is, therefore, recommended that such a Commission be provided for in the City Charter.

Means should be found to co-operate with the State of Michigan to make Lansing a capital of which the state will be proud and in which its citizens will be glad to live.

The following pages offer suggestions, carefully worked out, that will make for a better city in every way.

*J. H. Scott*  
*(Mrs C. L.) Martha S. Barker*  
*Alfred H. Doughty*  
*C. E. Bennett*  
*J. G. Reutter*  
*H. L. Bancroft*  
*Edw. E. Eckert*

LANSING PLAN COMMISSION.

## Letter of Transmittal

Saint Louis, Missouri,  
October 12, 1921.

City Planning Commission,  
Lansing, Michigan.

Gentlemen:—It is my pleasure to submit herewith the Comprehensive City Plan for Lansing prepared in accordance with our agreement of July, 1920.

Aside from the governmental activities of a capital city, Lansing is a rapidly growing industrial city. As such, it has a double responsibility. Together with the common problems of most industrial cities, Lansing must concern herself with the city's general appearance if she is to hold her place among other capital cities. Few cities may boast of a more advantageous or attractive site than Lansing, though lack of a city plan has in part been responsible for costly mistakes already made.

In the plan herein proposed Lansing will find an opportunity for the co-ordination of all future improvements, public and private, in the undeveloped areas of the city as well as in the reconstruction of the older areas. Hence the plan should form a program or policy by which growth may be guided in proper channels. The favorable reception already accorded the plan by builders and land developers well illustrates the advantage it holds for all whose interests it may touch and who are genuinely concerned with the proper uplifting of their community.

Lansing has not the difficult problems of street widening, of traffic and transportation common to so many other cities. Its opportunities for splendid accomplishments at comparatively low cost are justification for vigorous initiative while these opportunities are still present.

Permit me at this time to express the pleasure this work has afforded me and my office representatives in our association with the members of your Commission. The valuable co-operation and assistance of Mr. Otto E. Eckert, City Engineer, and Mr. H. Lee Bancroft, City Forester, has been a source of great help and is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

It was estimated the work in hand would consume approximately eighteen (18) months, which estimate proved essentially correct, my office having been diligently at work on the Lansing plan for a period

of sixteen (16) months. From August, 1920, to September, 1921, Mr. R. P. Hoffmann, of my office, was in Lansing securing data and information essential to the preparation of the plan, advising with your Commission and assisting in educational work. In addition, six visits of varying duration were made by W. D. Hudson, Earl O. Mills and L. D. Tilton in connection with the various city planning problems, while it has been my personal pleasure to make numerous visits to Lansing during the course of study and preparation of the plan.

Prior to the preparation of this report separate preliminary reports were submitted on streets, transit, transportation, recreation and zoning. It is hoped that the services and plans thus furnished will be an inspiration to continue the improvement of the city in accordance with the comprehensive city plan.

Respectfully submitted,

*Harland Bartholomew,*

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MAP SHOWING  
SUCCESSIVE BOUNDARIES

-LEGEND-

CITY LIMITS 1847  
CITY LIMITS 1859  
CITY LIMITS 1893  
CITY LIMITS 1917

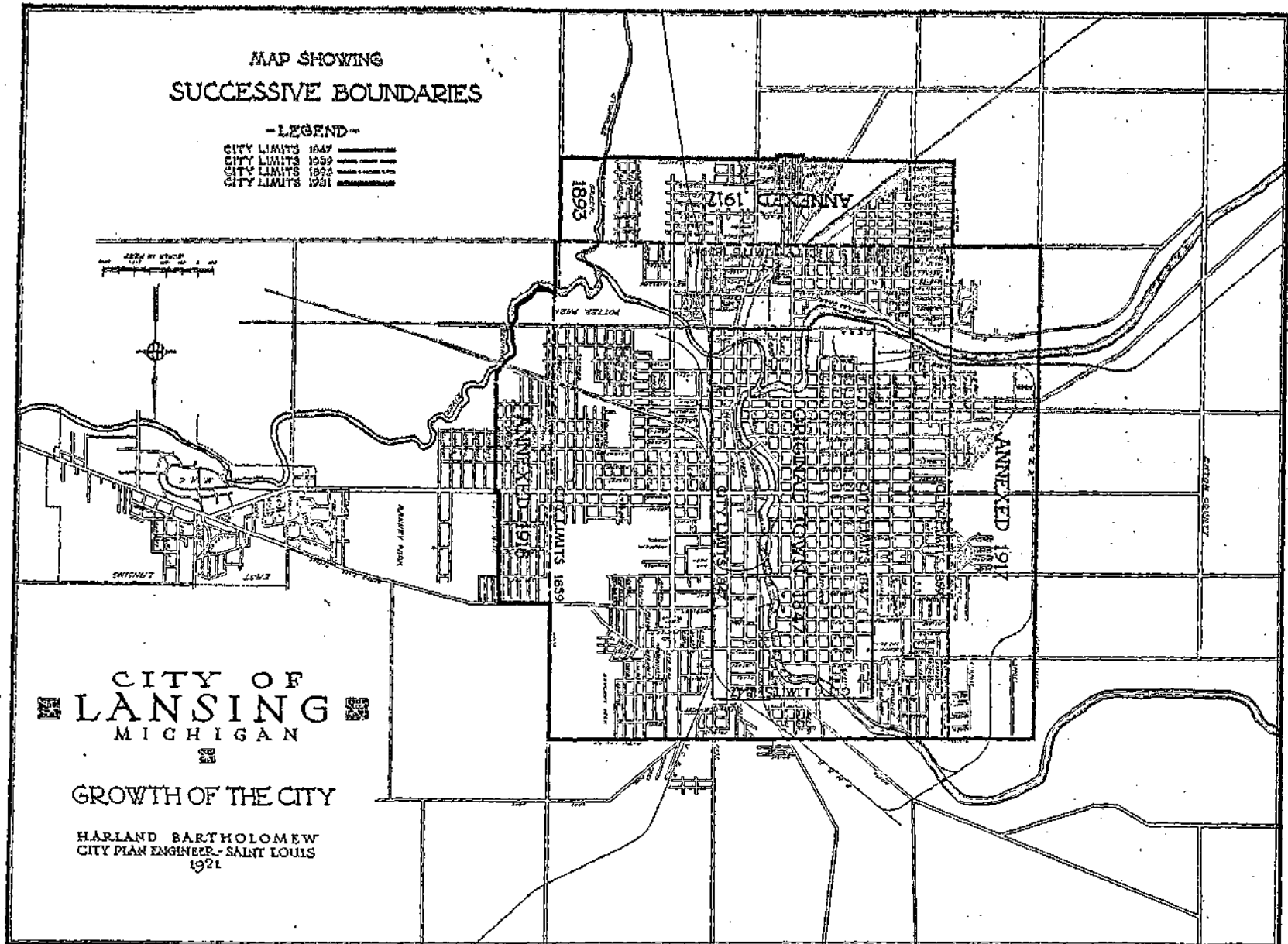


Plate No. 1



# THE LANSING PLAN

## Introduction

In 1837 what is now a busy city had its origin in the thick woods near the confluence of the Grand and Red Cedar Rivers in Michigan. The name of John Woolsey Burchard is associated with this event. He, it seems, was the first permanent settler and the leading spirit in the new settlement. Through his efforts a dam was built across the larger stream. The water power thus made available proved a stimulus to further growth. Lansing began its existence, consequently, with a promise of industry.

The small community was not widely known, however, for several years. Its inaccessibility deprived it of contact with the outside world. But those who came to the site stayed, impressed with its possibilities. They built bridges and made local improvements and otherwise aided in the development of a community consciousness that was later to assert itself. It was during the controversy in the Michigan legislature over the selection of a new capital site that this small settlement attained wider recognition.

The legislature voted in 1847 to remove the state capital from Detroit to a site more centrally located. This action called forth a number of generous offers from hopeful young communities that desired to be the first city of the state. Their claims to a central location were not all valid but some of them did propose valuable land grants and offer other inducements to secure the coveted distinction. History does not record the specific representations which were made by the community on the two rivers but it was selected as the site of the state capital, and officially approved in December, 1847. If there were any misgivings in the minds of the men who made the decision respecting the adaptability of the new townsite to such distinctive uses they were well offset by the knowledge that it met extremely well the requirements as to location. Its central position in the state has since proved a valuable asset to the city that developed there. See plate No. 2.

The selection of the little settlement on the Grand River as the new seat of government brought it at once into prominence and greatly encouraged its development. Pursuant to the act of the assembly authorizing the new capital,

approximately 1500 acres of land on both sides of the river were laid out as the Town of Michigan. There are still in existence plats showing the early layout.

The land that was selected for the new town was high and mostly covered with a thick growth of timber, a virgin forest. The site, despite the importance which it had attained, remained in this condition for some time. Even as late as 1850 it was reported still a "dense wilderness."

Communication between the capital and the remainder of the state, because of the nature of the country in which it was located, was very poor. This isolation thwarted for a time its growing tendencies. There was a general appreciation of the possibilities of the city but their realization was delayed by untoward conditions. The completion of a plank road to Detroit in 1852 afforded the first good means of travel to and from the city.

In 1859 when the name of the capital was changed to the city of Lansing, there was recorded a population a trifle over 3000. This index of size does not adequately represent the state of affairs in the city itself at that time. The city appeared to be much larger. There was an atmosphere of expansiveness created by the scattered homes and the extensive area laid out in streets and lots. The opportunities of the new capital invited exploitation and soon after the news of its good fortune spread, eastern capitalists and promoters bought up large tracts within the city to hold for speculation. The result was the driving of new arrivals to outlying districts and the consequent disuse of much available space closer to the center of the city. This condition, because of the failure of the city to grow as was anticipated, persisted for many years and was only overcome by the development of better means of communication and the consequent increase of population.

The coming of the railroads brought about a decided change in Lansing. They gave it the contacts that it had long needed. Five of them entered the city in the ten years from 1863 to 1873. The population doubled and industries began to appear. The dominant interest of the capital city quickly turned.

Industrial activity soon assumed the place that had long before been allotted to it. Like a great many pioneer communities in the new western country Lansing had early hoped for a pronounced industrial growth. When the first plat of the city was made there was left along the Grand River large areas designated for "Hydraulic Manufacturing." These areas finally came into their own after the railroads put Lansing in touch with the proper markets.

Today Lansing is as well known to the outside world for its extensive industries as for its being the capital of Michigan. Its political significance has contributed to its development to some extent, but its size is largely due to its factories. Their diversified products were widely known even before the advent of the automobile. Their prominence did much to fix Lansing as a center for this specialized industry. The present position of the city in the automobile manufacturing world is due in

no small measure to the ease with which interests of this sort could develop here. The pioneer automobile manufacturers were natives of the city. Moreover, there was space available for factory sites, there was convenient electric power, there were good shipping facilities, there was a supply of skilled mechanics, and finally there was the city itself, healthful, attractive, possessing a delightful climate, surrounded by a rich and beautiful agricultural region. Lansing was one of the first cities to become noted for automobile manufacturing.

The effect of the automobile industry on the city is splendidly shown in the population records. The official figures are as follows:

1860.....	3,074
1870.....	5,241
1880.....	8,319
1890.....	13,102
1900.....	16,485
1910.....	31,229
1920.....	57,327

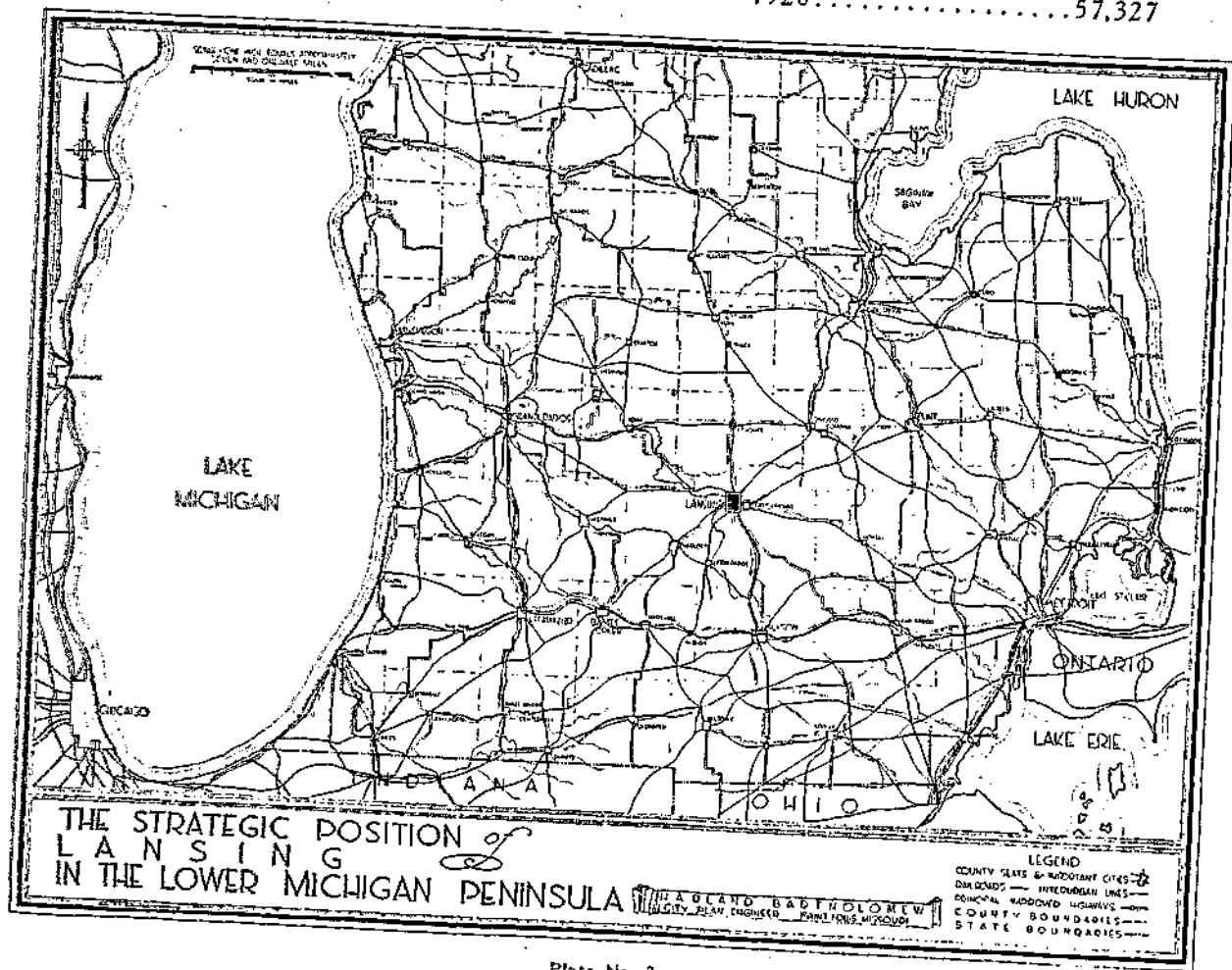


Plate No. 2

Previous to 1900 the rate of growth of Lansing was not remarkable. It was a comparatively small city and small cities frequently show high percentages of growth. But after 1900, when the rate of growth should normally have dropped, it rose. The population of Lansing increased 89.4% between 1900 and 1910 and in the last decade showed a growth only slightly less pronounced, 83%.

Thus through the eighty odd years of its existence has Lansing grown. It has developed a remarkable power of expansion. Each measure of growth, whether of population, new industries, commercial enterprises, or automobile output, places the city in a position to grow still more. It is doubtful if the vigor of previous years will persist, but there need be no fear that Lansing will soon become sluggish. Indeed it would be extremely unwise to expect any tendencies other than those which have previously been revealed.

There are facts that ably support a confidence in the city's future. Even were there no census figures to show previous growth one could still estimate the future of the city solely by its present character. The once densely wooded plateau upon which the first lines of the city were laid out is now quite compactly built up. The native forest trees have mostly disappeared, but on the streets are many others more regularly planted to take their places. As a home city Lansing satisfies; this in a measure promises further growth. But the most significant guarantees of future expansion lie in the resources of the city attractive to manufacturing interests.

Many of the primary factors which operate in the localization of industry are strong in Lansing. Its transportation facilities put it in direct contact with both Detroit and Chicago, the chief distributing centers for the region in which Lansing is situated. The four principal railroads dispatch over eighty freight trains through Lansing daily. An industrial belt has been built to open up greater and more convenient space for manufacturing. An electric interurban freight service supplements that of the steam railroads. Electric power developed along the watercourses of the Lower Peninsula is available in quantity in Lansing. The two rivers on which the city is located provide plenty of water. Coal supplies, especially when the extent of the railroad systems is considered, are comparatively close at hand. The timber resources, for which Michigan is famous, are

within easy reach, and the iron and steel centers on the south shore of Lake Michigan are but a few hours away. All these facts have a bearing on the future of Lansing's industries and along with them must be mentioned the supply of labor which the city has already developed. This item in itself is of great importance. To be able to locate in a community of capable, contented workmen is an object in industry that should not be underestimated. The proper development of this particular factor, however, is becoming increasingly a problem of the city. To make Lansing a better city to live in will be to make it a better city to work in. And with the improvement of living conditions must come also a correction of all defects of the physical city which thwart progress.

In the following pages, therefore, there is presented a plan for the Lansing of the future. The present city has been studied intimately and thoroughly. Its good features have been noted and made vital parts of the plan. Bad conditions have likewise been examined and measures are proposed to mitigate or destroy them. And finally the raw, unbuilt upon, outlying territory surrounding the city has been broadly surveyed and mapped for the growth which will undoubtedly spread over it in coming years.

It may readily be seen that a two-fold object is sought in the Lansing plan; the correction of certain defects and handicapping conditions in the city as it is today, and the direction of future growth along the most systematic and orderly lines. The present city shows evidence of haphazardness, carelessness, uncoordinated effort. The best city that could have been built upon the site has not been realized. A large part of the natural beauty of river and woodland, undoubtedly impressive in the early days of the community, has been permitted to disappear. The fact of its being the capital is but very slightly reflected in the appearance of the city. The regularity and order of the street layout of the early "Town of Michigan" has not even been continued. Streets end abruptly, make jogs and vary in width without reason in the areas outside the original town. There is consequent disruption of traffic flow and loss to industry, commerce, and eventually to the residents of the city. All the railroads operate through the city at grade, their crossings being both dangerous and wasteful. Separate rights-of-way are used and no effort

is made to simplify operation or combine for efficiency and better service. A belt line railroad has been built for the laudable purpose of opening up more convenient industrial sites but its location was ill-advised with reference to tendencies of growth and an orderly residential expansion. Already the constrictive effect of the belt is being felt. The street railway lines have likewise been developed with little regard for the demands of the future. Their relationship to residential and industrial growth and to arterial traffic-ways is not well defined. Some of the lines are in extremely poor position to grow with the city. Parks and play areas, furthermore, have not kept pace with other growth. The pronounced industrial character which Lansing has lately assumed should dictate a more thorough interest on the part of the city in such facilities. Too great dependence has heretofore been placed on the generosity of individual citizens. As a consequence Lansing is missing the beneficial effect of a well-rounded system of recreational facilities. In housing the city is more fortunate, but still the standards and safeguards are imperfect. There are no substantial guarantees that present conditions will continue. The city cannot be sure that areas either within or without its limits that are adapted primarily to residential, commercial or industrial uses will be reserved and protected for these respective uses. In its present state Lansing is a strange mixture of factories, stores and homes with certain individual units of each type preempting space properly belonging to another use. Conflict of interest has resulted and incidentally property values have suffered

unnecessary derangement. These deficiencies all are largely the product of undirected, uncontrolled growth. They are in no way peculiar to Lansing alone. They are prevalent in varying degree in almost all American cities. The science of city planning has become so preeminently "replanning" because cities have permitted such haphazard conditions to develop.

A city plan is the best means available to Lansing for the direction of future growth. It is the sort of guide which the city should have had when its individuality first began to show. Adopted today it will tend to encourage corrections and improvements in the present city which will offset to some extent previous lack of planning.

But most important of all, the city plan will direct attention to the larger city that is yet to be built. By forethought and coordinated planning Lansing can yet be made a capital city that will far better represent its political and industrial position than does the present city. Built according to a preconceived plan, Lansing should reveal in future years a thoroughly economical use of land space, a harmonious and orderly disposition of factories, stores and homes, a proper placing of schools, parks and public buildings, an efficient transit service, better railroad facilities and a greater interest in the city's general appearances. These characteristics of a city constructed to meet modern conditions cannot, however, be realized in Lansing unless there is a widespread disposition to forsake the petty trifling details of growth and view the city as a whole.

## A Major Street Plan

### *The Functions of Major Streets*

The street plan of the Town of Michigan, as Lansing was first named, was unusually generous. Except where the rivers intervened, a checkerboard system was rigidly adhered to. There was an overabundance of streets, many 82.5 feet in width. Subsequent growth, piecemeal in character, quite naturally resulted in haphazard street planning. In any consideration of means and methods by which to develop a satisfactory street plan, recognition must first be taken of the following defects:

- Streets of lavish widths and too rigid uniformity in old portion of city;
- Lack of differentiation in street width in subsequent development;
- Lack of continuity of streets strategically situated;
- Too few radial streets;
- No circumferential streets;
- No well defined policy of land subdivision and street platting;
- Lack of adequate authority for control of land subdivision and street platting.

The street plan is the basic element of the city plan. A preponderance of wide streets involves waste of land and invites excessive maintenance cost. Streets of insufficient width hamper traffic movement and place an economic handicap on the growth of a city. Unbalanced design or distribution of streets may cause unbalanced growth, shifting centers of population and of commerce with consequent economic waste. For these reasons it becomes imperative that the modern city evolve a definite program and policy of street planning

whereby past defects may gradually be corrected and future mistakes avoided.

A major street plan for Lansing becomes now primarily a matter of adjustment. The opportunities of 1921 are not the opportunities of 1847, the date of the establishment of the first city boundaries. (See Plate No. 1, page 10, showing growth of the city area.) A far more desirable plan could have then been designed. Quite fortunately the establishment and execution of a major street plan for Lansing does not involve a large program of street widening as it does in many other cities. (See Plate No. 3 showing width of streets. Note unusual mileage of wide streets.) The major street plan of Lansing does involve, however, the elimination of a very considerable number of jogs and abrupt endings (Plate No. 4), the creation of more "through" routes of travel, the development of "radial" and "circumferential" highways, all so connected with each other and with county roads and state highways as to permit an equally well balanced expansion of the city in all directions.

The various widenings, extensions and openings of streets necessary for proper city growth during the next twenty-five to fifty years are shown on the Major Street Plate No. 5. The specific suggestions for improvements in various streets are suggested in detail below. Plate No. 6 indicates width of roadway and sidewalk for both major and minor streets of various types and in varying stages of development.

On Plate No. 7 is shown the distribution of population in Lansing. It is far from uniform. With increased disproportionate distribution of population will come increased economic

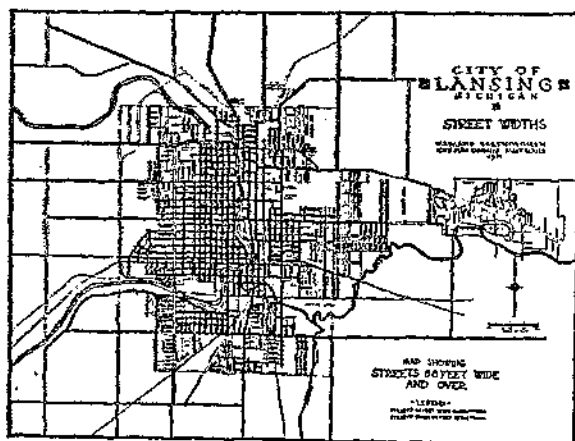


Plate No. 3

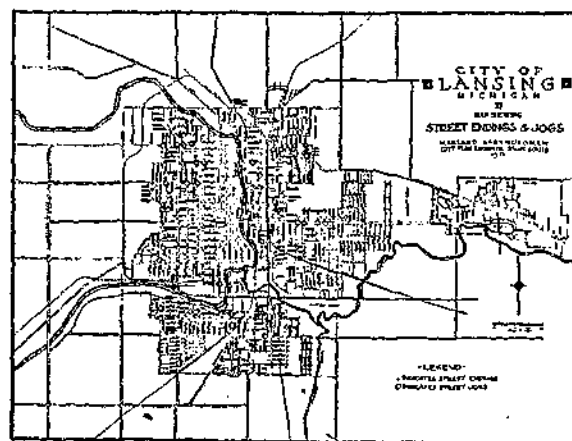


Plate No. 4

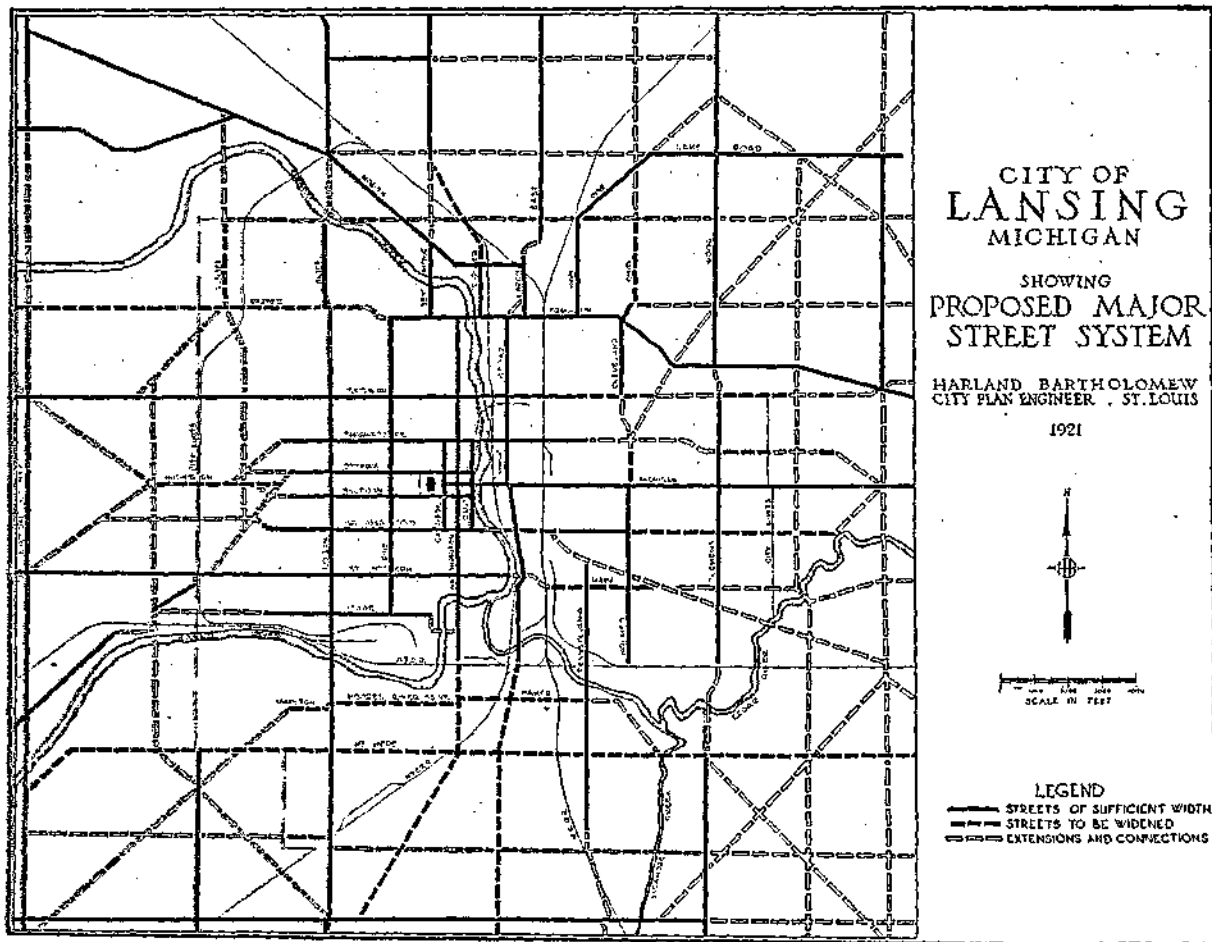


Plate No. 5

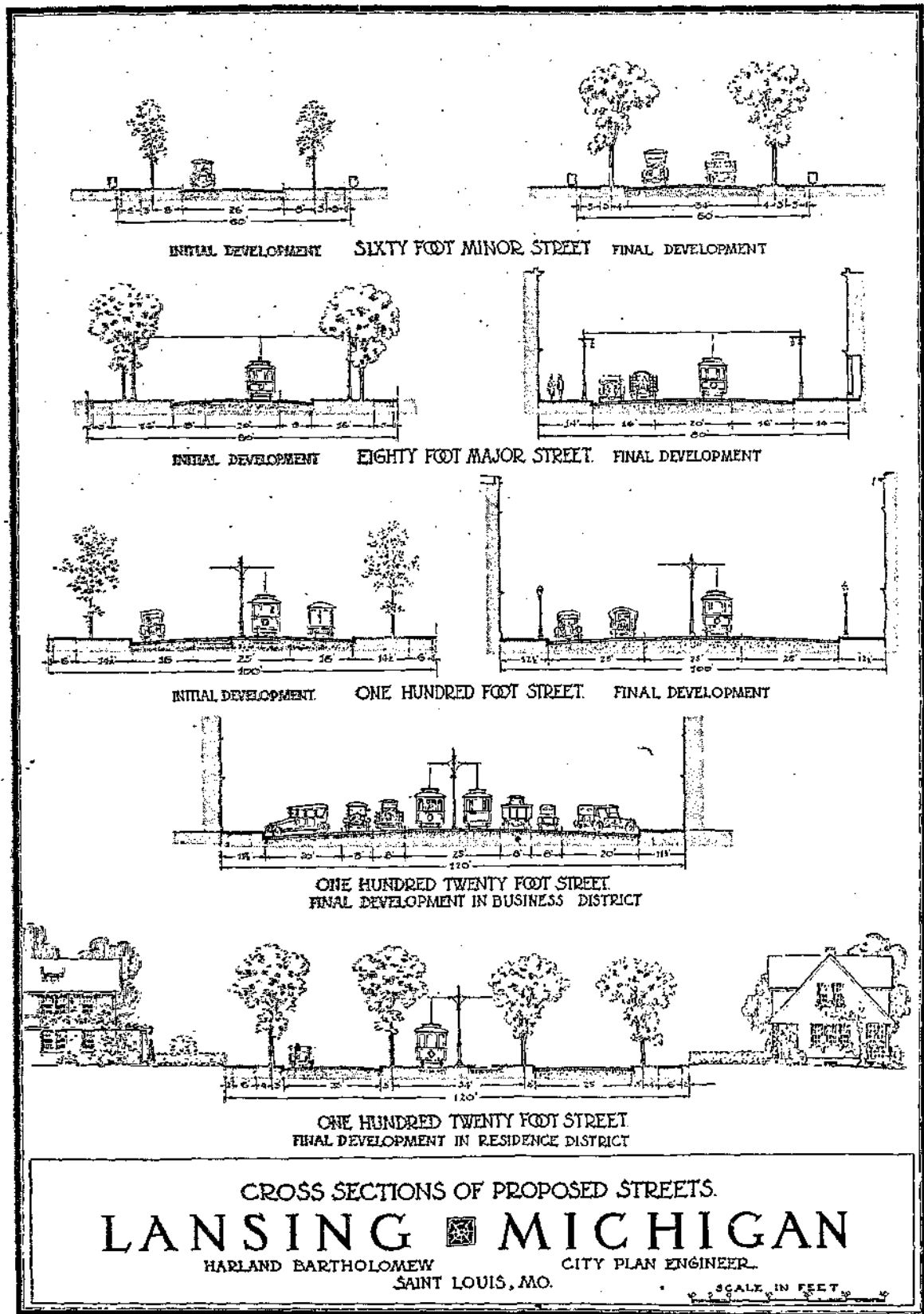
handicaps and financial burdens. Herein lies the justification of meeting the cost involved in the execution of the major street plan. Two forms of procedure are involved in carrying out this plan: (a) condemnation of property in platted areas, (b) regulation of land subdivision in unplatted areas.

### *Problems of Execution*

The City of Lansing under its present charter possesses the customary powers of condemnation essential to the execution of street openings, extensions or widenings in areas already platted. Each year certain of the more important projects should be undertaken in order that there may be gradual realization of the full plan. The costs in this way may be gradually absorbed. That proportion of the cost to be borne by property directly benefited and so assessed may be spread over a period of years, thus distributing payments over the period within which the increases in values will accrue.

That proportion of the cost to be borne by the city at large may be provided through a bond issue, though the estimated relatively low cost of the major street plan projects recommended justifies the prediction that unless a considerable number of projects be undertaken at one time the city's share of the cost could usually be absorbed out of current revenues. In this connection it may be suggested that should the proposed constitutional amendment on excess condemnation pass it will prove to be a useful instrument in the gradual execution of the major street plan.

With respect to the development of the major street plan in unplatted property it is necessary that a definite policy of land subdivision be formulated. This will encourage better standards and more stable types of development and will undoubtedly meet with the support and co-operation of responsible land development companies and home builders. It should hereafter be the concern of the





city that land to be subdivided should conform to the Lansing Plan in every respect.

Lansing does not possess complete authority by which to insure enforcement of the major street plan in unplatted property. More particularly it lacks authority to control land subdivision immediately outside the city limits.

Here follows, in some detail, a description of the various streets, existing and proposed, that constitute the major street plan. Unfortunately space will scarcely permit a thorough explanation of the considerations involved in their selection. Suffice it to say, however, that they are given in a certain order of importance, beginning with the radial streets, in which Lansing is particularly deficient, and whose position in the completed structure cannot be overemphasized.

### *Details of Major Street Plan*

**NORTH STREET**, connecting with the highway system to the northwest, is one of the most

important entries into the city. Its traffic is distributed chiefly over Seymour and Turner Streets. For present traffic purposes and for many years to come the width of North Street will suffice. This is true, however, only if the whole thoroughfare system to the north of the city is fully developed. If traffic is forced to concentrate on North Street it should be widened.

**TURNER STREET** is another extremely valuable radial thoroughfare. It has characteristics similar to North Street, but is more used because of its being part of the trunk line highway system. It should be widened to eighty feet and extended northwest to the DeWitt Road. This width is not needed now but should be anticipated by establishing set-back lines. The co-operation of property owners should be enlisted in this as well as other widening plans. Turner Street is not built up solidly north of North Street and the widening process may be carried out now with little expense to the city.

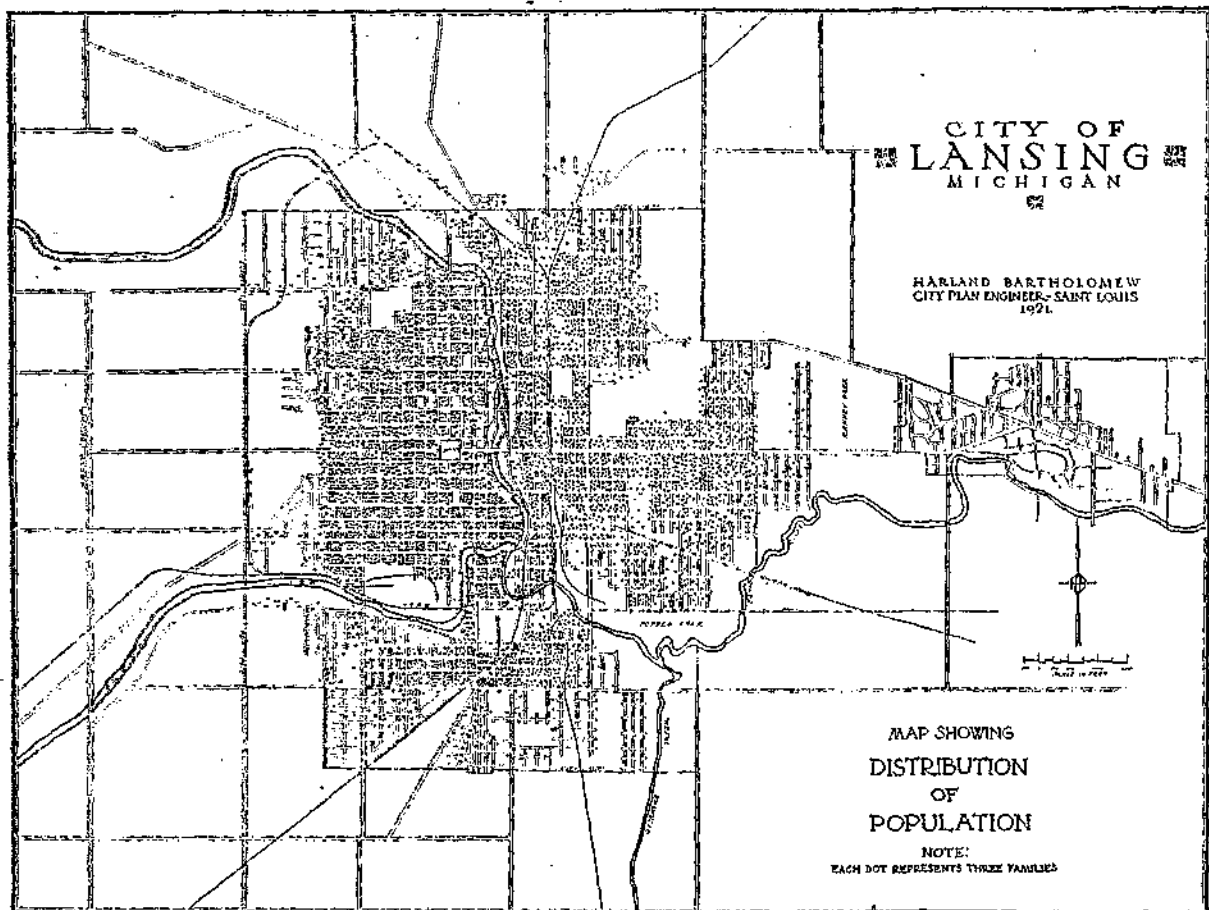


Plate No. 7



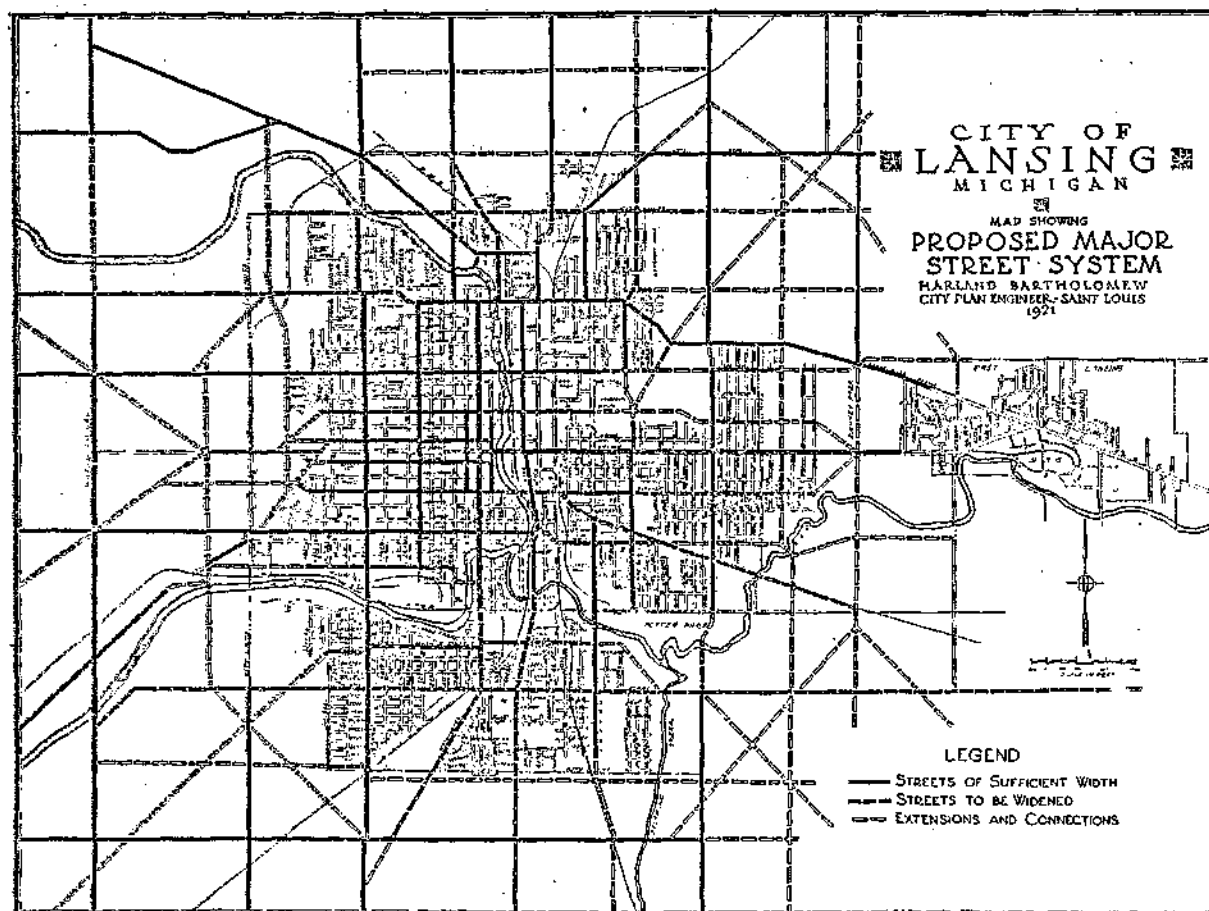


Plate No. 8

PINE LAKE ROAD for a short distance out of the city is likewise a radial, forming an easterly entry and tributary to Franklin Avenue. It should be continued in a northeasterly direction, parallel to the Michigan Central.

WASHINGTON AVENUE is the only radial in the southern portion of the city. It is a very valuable street and should be widened throughout to eighty feet. The need of greater width is apparent now and gives this project more than ordinary importance. It should be among the first items of the major street development program. Outside the present city limits Washington Avenue terminates in an east and west road. It should be continued on to meet the north and south road of this section as shown on the major street plan.

BATTLE CREEK TRUNK HIGHWAY, connecting with Main Street southwest of the city, is the only other radial entry into Lansing. Separation of grades where this street crosses the Grand Trunk Railway is being planned and is a very desirable improvement.

Supplementing these existing radials are proposed a series of new ones tapping all quarters of the surrounding country. These new streets and their relation to existing streets and to highways outside the city are presented in Plate No. 9. Of these, two deserve special mention. Through the release of the Industrial School property within the city there is offered a splendid opportunity to introduce a new short-cut street leading northeast. The territory which this thoroughfare would serve is well adapted to residential development. A radial touching Shiawassee Street extended would put the great residential area northeast of the city many minutes closer in traveling time to the business center and to the industrial districts than it would be if it were developed wholly with a rigid rectangular street system. The creation of this new time-saving thoroughfare is to be strongly urged.

A similar opportunity to introduce a new outlet into a sparsely developed section is

found southeast of the business district. The Pere Marquette enters Lansing over a right-of-way that cuts diagonally through both east and west and north and south streets. The railroad, the lack of street cars, and the fact that persons living near Potter Park have to travel two sides of a triangle, have combined to keep this section from developing properly. A glance at the Population Map, Plate No. 7, will show how sparsely settled this area is. Obviously the district needs new connections. An economical joint use of facilities by Pere Marquette and Grand Trunk would release the right-of-way of the former for a new major traffic way to the southeast.

As will be seen by reference to the Transportation Plate No. 24, it is proposed that the railroads running north and south through the city join in the construction and use of elevated tracks. The Pere Marquette from Trowbridge would parallel the Grand Trunk, and run northward on the elevated from the intersection of

the Michigan Central and Grand Trunk. By an exchange of rights-of-way the city could secure the old diagonal right-of-way of the Pere Marquette. It so happens that there are no industries along the present right-of-way to demand its retention. Conferences between railroad and city looking toward the realization of this scheme should be held at once.

The service of the remaining new diagonal major streets is apparent from the plan. There are no insuperable obstacles in the way of any of them. As successive subdivisions are laid out they should be dedicated, substantially as they are shown on the Major Street Plan.

The rectangular major street system is more easily comprehended. In suggesting streets for this phase of the system the aim has been to place through, heavy traffic streets at intervals of about one-half mile over the entire area of the city. A precise distribution and "through" character have not always been secured because of faulty previous planning.

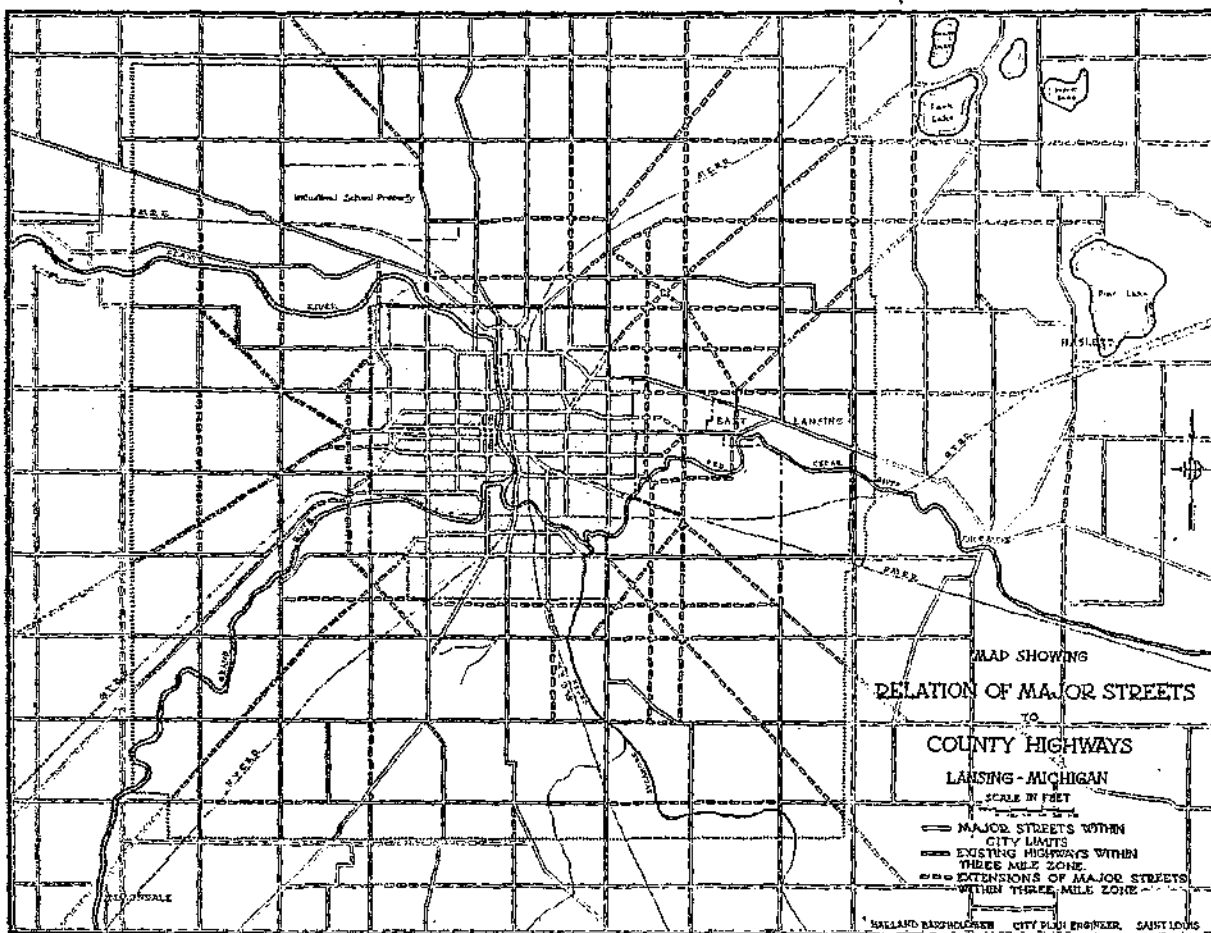


Plate No. 9

Existing crosstown major streets are as follows:

**PINE STREET**, the first major street west of Washington, is a comparatively short street terminating at Isaac on the south and Willow on the north. Although it might be termed a secondary major street, its location is particularly advantageous. It will serve as a crosstown traffic way through a very well developed section of the city. It intersects all the important and centrally located east and west major streets and affords communication between the Olds Motor Works and the industrial district to the north. This makes it a street of no little value. Its present width of 82.5 feet provides ample space in which to increase the paving (roadway width) should future traffic demand.

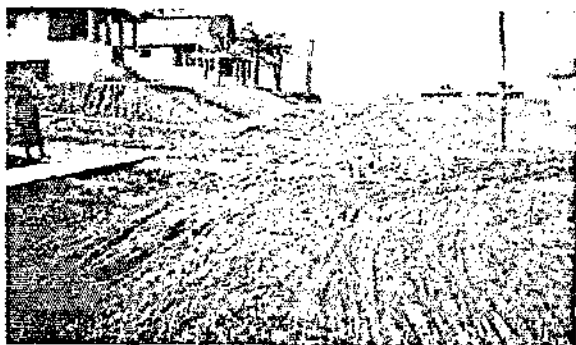
**LOGAN STREET** is the only street west of Washington Avenue which offers through communication between the northwest and southwest sections of the city. Although the development of these areas is of comparatively recent date, Logan Street already attracts considerable traffic. On it is the only river bridge between Washington Avenue and Waverly Park, and as a consequence a great number of vehicles naturally seek this river crossing. Grade crossings, however, affect the usefulness of this street. Plans for a future new river bridge should include rectification of present street grades and elimination of the Grand Trunk crossings.

Additional improvements in this street should be made to give it more of the character of a thoroughfare. A cut-off at Warner Street into Alice, a river crossing at the present northern limits and a new street for a distance of approximately a quarter of a mile in length will connect Logan with North Street and the Dewitt Road. This northward extension will have to be made.

The improvements suggested will make Logan Street one of the city's most important thoroughfares. Its location, its width, and the probable development of the several sections of the city through which it passes assure its usefulness and will justify the expenditures which may be necessary to give it a "through" character.

West of Logan Street there are no existing streets which would form a continuous north and south thoroughfare. Several irregular subdivisions in this section have forced the planning here of a somewhat complicated arrangement of major streets. The industries which have settled in the western portion of Lansing have been considered in the major street layout. Ample provision for the distribution of traffic is made. A new north and south major street connecting the industries with the residential territory south of the river has been indicated. This new river crossing, midway between Logan Street and the county line, will undoubtedly prove very useful. See Plate No. 16, page 36.

**CEDAR STREET** is the chief element of the first major traffic way east of Grand River. It has been found necessary to join a group of streets to make this thoroughfare. East Street at the north connects with Larch by a cut-off at McKinley Street, and Larch joins Cedar at Franklin. The Cedar Street major traffic way traverses a district which already gives evidence of future industrial activity. In addition to the large vehicular movement which will consequently originate or terminate on this street it will, undoubtedly, because of the connections north and south, invite a great deal of through traffic. For this reason its predominant width of 82.5 feet should be provided throughout. The elimination of the grade crossing of the Pere Marquette Railroad at Beaver Street as



Illustrating the raw, uncouth effect of imposing a rectangular system of street platting upon irregular topography.

# CITY OF LANSING MICHIGAN PROPOSED STREET EXTENSIONS AND CONNECTIONS

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW  
CITY PLAN ENGINEER. ST. LOUIS MO  
1921

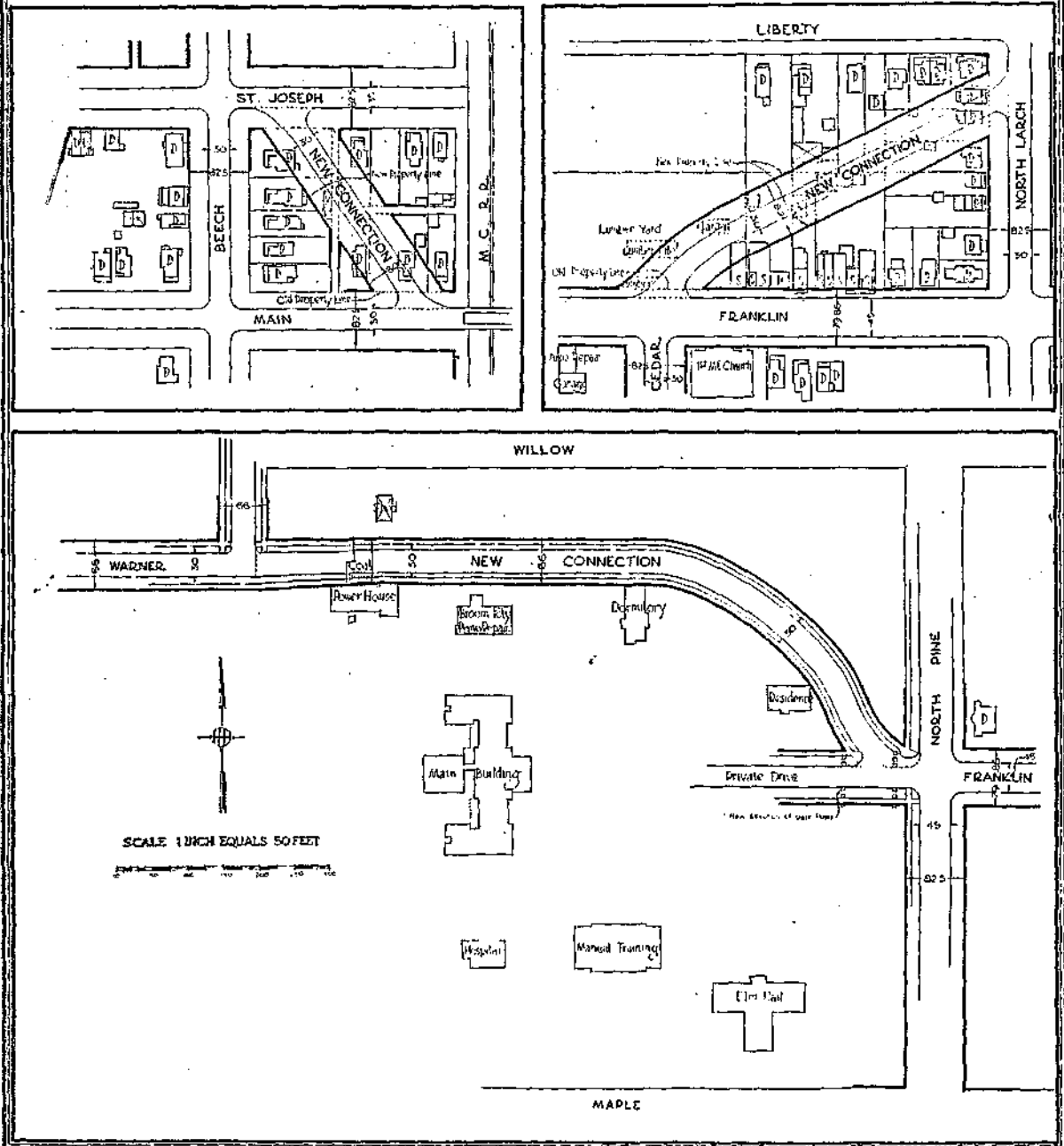


Plate No. 10

treated in the Railroad Plate No. 24, will greatly add to the usefulness of this street.

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE is the longest continuous north and south street east of Cedar. Although it connects with no trunk line roads its exceptional width and location makes it a valuable unit of the major street plan. Through the central part of the city, however, Pennsylvania Avenue has a boulevard character which should be continued southward making it more suitable as a pleasure way. North of Franklin the Pine Lake Road will form the entry by way of High Street, with east and west diversion. Traffic using Pennsylvania south of Kalamazoo will find opportunity for distribution at the new thoroughfare on the Pere Marquette right-of-way.

HOLMES STREET and several others east of Pennsylvania are joined to supplement the latter as a north and south thoroughfare. The usefulness of this route will always be limited by the abrupt termination at Potter Park, but the necessity of having such a major street in this section may be clearly seen when its relationship to the new streets through the industrial school property is studied. To make Holmes Street and its complements fully serviceable, however, the narrow Ohio and Cleveland Avenues should both be widened to not less than sixty-six feet. The former is now sixty and the latter fifty feet wide. Ohio, moreover, should be given a better connection with Cleveland at Taft. The present arrangement of these streets is a great handicap to traffic circulation and an obstacle to transit extension.

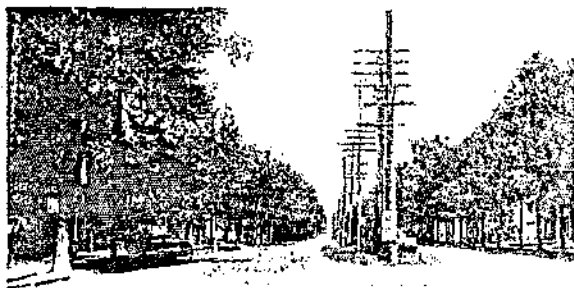
CLEMENS AVENUE with a connection through to Wood Street at the Grand River Road, and an extension to the south to Mount Hope Avenue can be made a splendid major traffic way. Development is now gradually

approaching and absorbing tracts adjacent to it. Industrial school lands have blocked east and west street extensions but with the removal of the school, these lands will in all probability be available for other uses. The major street plan should guide new street layouts in this section.

MICHIGAN AVENUE (east) is second to Washington Avenue as a business street. It is, however, probably the most important highway entry into Lansing. It intersects the old Grand River Road, or the Detroit trunk line road, in East Lansing and carries most of the traffic into the city from the east, displacing to a certain extent the old Grand River Avenue—Franklin Avenue route. The latter, however, still offers a very direct route through Lansing to the northwest for those who do not find it necessary to enter the business district.

Aside from the vehicular traffic, Michigan Avenue carries also a double track trolley line from Washington Avenue to the city limits. In paving the street from the Michigan Central east the roadway has been widened to sixty-eight feet to Pennsylvania and fifty feet beyond, which will care for traffic for some years. It should be pointed out that the present street width, one hundred fifteen feet, however, permits this to be done without affecting abutting properties, illustrating the advantage of the city of having ample street width available where it is needed. Provision should be made, however, to carry the full 99 feet in width clear to East Lansing, and to create the plaza at Ranney Park proposed in Plate No. 28.

ALLEGAN and OTTAWA STREETS have been designated as major streets west of the Capitol, supplanting Michigan Avenue (west) which terminates at the Capitol grounds. Allegan and Ottawa actually serve as major



The dignity and character of Pennsylvania Avenue is wholly upset by a hideous row of poles.



Poles recently removed.

streets to their present termini at the city limits. Here it is proposed to converge them by means of short connections to Michigan Avenue. Not only will this distribute traffic through the congested center; it will encourage a further distribution of the traffic destined either to the north or south. A glance at the Major Street Plate No. 8 will show the street arrangement proposed for this section as a means of offering traffic a choice of routes.

**SHIAWASSEE STREET** is the first of the three streets north of Michigan Avenue which crosses the Grand River. An extension through the Industrial School property to Vine Street and a short diagonal from an eastern extension of Vine Street to Michigan Avenue will make Shiawassee a by-pass street, not only capable of serving a considerable area of the city but a valuable relief for East Michigan Avenue. The western terminus of Shiawassee is now at Jensen. A diagonal southwest from here will connect it with Michigan and still further assist the distribution of traffic through the central area.

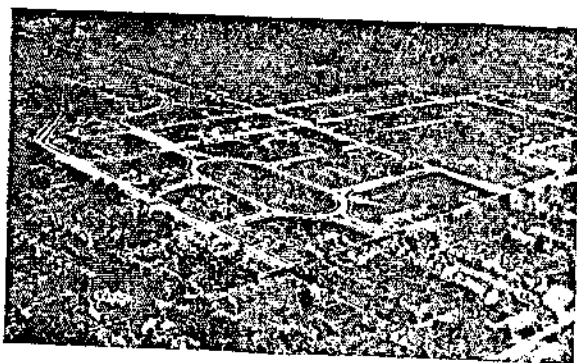
**SAGINAW STREET** provides an entrance into the city from Grand Ledge and Grand Rapids. On it is located the second river crossing north of Michigan Avenue. This street affords a direct connection between the residential district on the west and the industries on the east side of the river. The street is of sufficient width west of Pennsylvania Avenue but from there east it should be widened to eighty feet and extended as additional territory east of the city is platted.

**FRANKLIN AVENUE**, being a part of the old Plank Road from Detroit, early became the main street in North Lansing. Most of the traffic on this street, however, is east of Washington Avenue. A cut-off across the north end

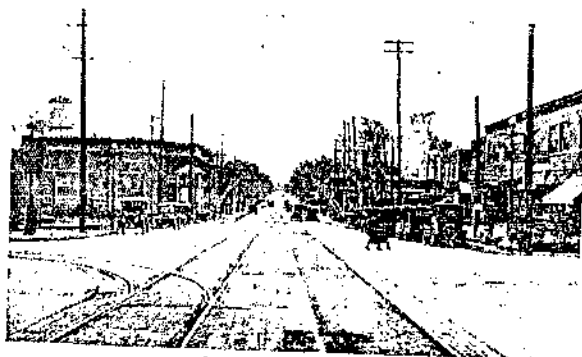
of the School for the Blind property to Warner Street would greatly increase the usefulness of Franklin Avenue. The development which will undoubtedly take place in the northwest section makes this connection most desirable. A single track car line is now laid in Franklin Avenue. Should it ever become necessary to have a double track on this street, its present width will be ample to provide for the necessary widening of the roadway. Warner Street, however, should be widened to eighty feet.

**KALAMAZOO STREET** bears much the same relation to Michigan Avenue as does Shiawassee Street. A new bridge, the rectification of the dangerous and indirect approach on the west side, and the elimination of the grade crossing on the east side, will greatly increase the usefulness of this street. A diagonal to Michigan Avenue from its present intersection with Clippert will prove advantageous as a means of inviting a distribution of traffic that now is forced to use Michigan Avenue. A similar new street at its western terminus at McPherson Street is also recommended. The tracts which these new streets traverse have not yet been developed. Between the Michigan Central and Hosmer, and from Holmes east, Kalamazoo Street should be widened to eighty feet. The elimination of grade crossings on this route is essential to its full development.

**ST. JOSEPH STREET** and **MAIN STREET** comprise the next main thoroughfare south of Kalamazoo. Full improvement of these streets involves the construction of a new river bridge at St. Joseph Street, platting of a new street east of the Pere Marquette, and widening from the Michigan Central east to the Pere Marquette. At the Cedar River this street should



A bird's-eye, aeroplane view of a new subdivision planned in an attractive way by men who were not afraid to depart from a rectangular precedent.



Where Washington Avenue becomes narrower south of the Grand Trunk crossing.

meet a new north and south major street, and with it cross the river into undeveloped territory. At the western city limits the trunk line road to Battle Creek can be brought to St. Joseph Street by a short connection, details of which appear on Plate No. 10.

ISAAC STREET and ELM STREET, with the new bridge at Elm Street over the Grand River, will become a valuable thoroughfare for east and west bound traffic across this section of the city. To add to the usefulness of this major street it should be extended west to meet the Battle Creek highway.

The MOORE'S RIVER DRIVE—BAKER STREET route should be widened throughout to sixty-six feet. This is the only thoroughfare lying between Mount Hope Avenue and the Grand River. It is already a very busy traffic way. The proposed diagonals at each end of this artery connect with Mount Hope Avenue and would make this street much more useful.

MOUNT HOPE AVENUE is the longest single street in the whole major street system.

It is a thoroughfare extremely well located but as yet accommodating a comparatively small amount of traffic. As the city continues to expand to the south, however, it will become a great deal more important. Its present width will not adequately meet future requirements; it should be widened to eighty feet.

Of all the streets enumerated, probably the most important are the diagonal streets and circumferentials. The most important of these is that which extends northeast from the Industrial School Grounds. This street would provide a direct entry into the city. As none of the property through which it passes is at present improved or developed, a wonderful opportunity is presented for developing an artery which will have a great influence on the city's future expansion. In a like manner similar radials have been proposed to the southeast, southwest and northwest. These and the counter-radials or circumferentials are, generally speaking, through undeveloped territory.

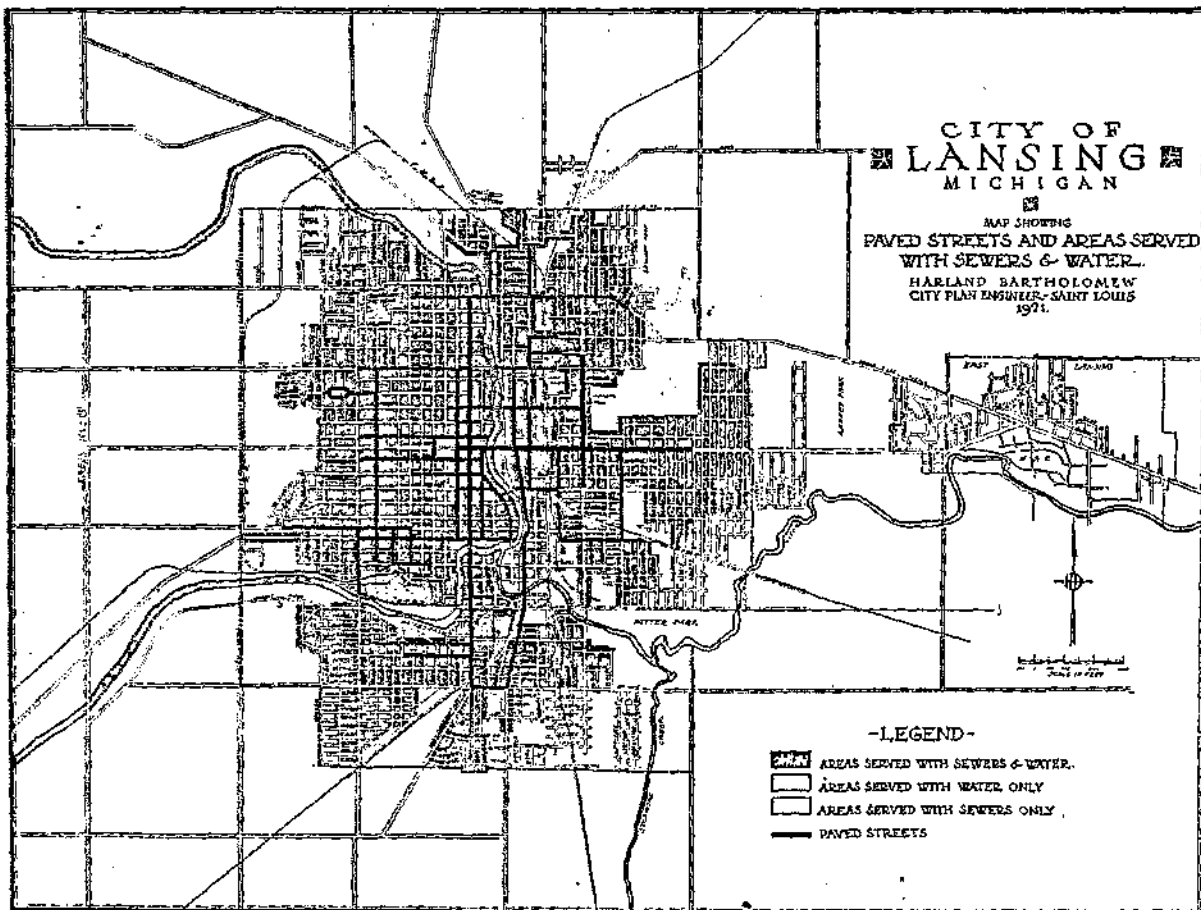


Plate No. 11



In addition to the diagonals a number of new rectangular streets have been planned. The locations of these anticipate future expansion. They are so placed as to provide direct north and south and east and west "through" routes across the city. Now is the time to establish the rights of the city with respect to such streets and to safeguard these rights-of-way against conditions which would later make the acquisition of the necessary property very costly.

Plate No. 10 illustrates many of the details of the improvements suggested above. By providing the connections shown and by insisting upon the extensions of the designated major streets, as shown upon the Major Street Plan, Lansing can evolve out of the haphazard jumble of streets on the outskirts a street layout capable of rendering service to the larger city. For traffic coming into the city over the county highways, there will be offered direct and inviting thoroughfares to the business section. For traffic movement in later years, counter radials are suggested which will provide for circulatory passage through what is now

the outskirts of the city. For the relief of traffic congestion in the downtown district, there are provided by-pass connections from both north and south, and east and west.

When tested in detail by the problems of actual traffic movement, the major street plan proposed will be found adequate. From any part of the city it should be possible, without going farther than a quarter of a mile, to reach a major street having direct connections with other major streets leading to any other part of the city. As the city grows these streets should invariably be the first paved in any new district, and it should be the rule that by their width and the character of the improvement that is given them, these streets naturally attract through traffic. This differentiation and concentration of traffic on well-chosen routes will aid symmetrical and economical expansion. A fully developed major street system will assure the city the strong framework of thoroughfares which is essential to orderly growth.





## Recreation

### *Recreation in the Modern City*

Provision of facilities for public recreation is an obligation of the modern city. There is a certain minimum of space which should be set aside for the recreation of small children, for whom play is the first form of education; for adolescent youth, for whom out-of-door sports and games are vital necessities; for grown-ups, for whom quieter, more passive pleasures in the open air are equally essential. For the small children there should be playgrounds within easy walking distance. For the more active older children and youth there should be playfields and areas for more highly organized games and sports. For adults there should be neighborhood parks, and large parks on the outskirts of the city in which are reserved generous tracts of native scenery. Supplementing these chief items of the well rounded recreational equipment should also be many small open spaces, squares, triangles and the like, which, while not affording opportunity for active play do soften and modify the every-day outlook of people who live in the thickly built-up sections. Moreover, there should be social centers in which community spirit may find expression under public auspices. These elements of a complete system of recreational facilities cannot properly develop in the city without municipal aid. The city should not grow without planning for them.

The expansion of the city's recreational equipment must keep pace with growing demands. Plans for this expansion must be

formulated along with those for new streets, new street car lines, new residential districts, and the like. In the city plan, consequently, is a section which aims to outline for municipal officials an organic scheme for the constant improvement and extension of recreation facilities. Not being a complete recreational survey, it deals not so much with the type or character of individual elements of the system, or the organization and policies of the personnel which directs their use, as with the proper distribution of units and the reservation of adequate land space for them in advance of needs.

Viewed broadly, therefore, a plan for the advancement of public recreation in Lansing must comprehend the following:

- (1) Development of facilities for organized play which will not overlap and which will be under competent and proper direction.
- (2) Extension of neighborhood park facilities so that parks of this character may be accessible to larger numbers and so that the present much abused small areas may be relieved and given more orderly development.

- (3) The rounding out and development of outer park facilities so that areas similar to Potter Park and Moores Park may be as convenient to the northwestern and northeastern parts of the city as these two areas are respectively to their immediate neighborhoods.
- (4) The creation of a splendid encircling chain of drives touching all park sites and making accessible all the particularly beautiful river scenery of Lansing.
- (5) The development, wherever opportunity is presented, of small squares, triangles, plazas and the like, so that these features by their very numbers will add to the dignity and character of the capital city.
- (6) The co-operation of all agencies interested in social development to the end that Lansing may have properly located centers for the accommodation of normal community social activities.

Plans and suggestions for the accomplishment of the aims enumerated above should be considered as more than mere utopian fancies. A broad, wholehearted concern for matters affecting public recreation is a valuable civic asset. A city that has a vital interest in its parks and pleasure grounds is known to be advancing. It benefits in many ways from its interest. The proposals which are made here for the extension and betterment of recreational facilities in Lansing can but be accepted for what they seek to accomplish—the constant improvement of living conditions in Lansing.

### *Providing for Recreation in Lansing Playgrounds*

Playgrounds and spaces for games and sports, because of the inadequacy of these facilities in Lansing, must receive immediate consideration. Of primary importance in developing such features is the fixing of responsibility for providing the necessary physical equipment. Some doubt exists as to the logical centering of this responsibility. The Board of Education is making some effort to care for the normal play desires of school children. The Park Board, as a part of its park development program, is installing playground

apparatus in some of the parks. There is duplication of effort. The fixing of responsibility, therefore, is vital. This could quickly be accomplished by conference between representatives of those agencies which are interested in playground work.

It seems almost the universal experience in other cities that playground activities are better concentrated in the public school system. Certain it is that all the organized play activities of the city were better administered by some department of the municipality rather than by private agencies. The Board of Education, because of the fact that it maintains a personnel qualified for teaching purposes is in position to organize and administer a playground staff. Furthermore, the physical plant of the school system lends itself well to organized play activities. A great share of the value of playground work depends upon the ability of the directing organization to teach children to play. The mere provision of equipment is but a part of the problem. For this reason the educational system of the city has come to be considered the logical place for the centering of this activity.

If the playground work of Lansing is to be extended, however, it will be necessary for the Board of Education to adopt a different policy with respect to the provision of play space about the schools. With very few exceptions school buildings are not only poorly located on their sites, but the areas surrounding them are much too small for even the free, undirected play of the children. There is, in newer buildings, however, evidence of a desire to correct this policy.

The Warner Street School in the size of its grounds and the general placing of the building, is perhaps representative of the best. The Barnes Avenue School ground is another example of a more spacious play area. Both these schools have yards large enough for playground purposes and their value will be better appreciated as the school population surrounding them increases. But many other schools which are much more advantageously situated are handicapped for want of space. Because of this condition it is difficult to suggest precise locations of playgrounds based on the needs of the city. In practically all districts where the school population is densest and where playgrounds would be of greatest service the present convenient school yards are cramped and surrounded by improved property. An

intimate study of the whole playground situation in Lansing leads to the following conclusions:

- (1) The responsibility for the management and establishment of playgrounds should be taken by the public school officials.
- (2) This centering of responsibility need not deter the Park Department from co-operating in playground development.
- (3) The establishment of playgrounds should conform to a carefully planned arrangement of playground service areas, taking account of the distribution of school children, the characteristics of various districts, artificial barriers such as railroads, car lines, etc., and similar factors. See Plate No. 12.
- (4) Playgrounds should be maintained yearly in the following locations:
  - (a) Ferris Park
  - (b) Moores Park
  - (c) Allen Street School
  - (d) Christiancy School
  - (e) Walnut Street School
  - (f) Franklin Avenue School
  - (g) On the site of Kalamazoo Street School
  - (h) Cedar Street School
  - (i) In the district now served by the Cherry Street School
  - (j) In the district now served by the playground in Oak Park
  - (k) Logan Street School
  - (l) On property recently given the city by Mr. Mark Clifford
  - (m) Successively as demand arises in additional districts shown on Plate No. 12.

Of the playground locations enumerated above the first four have already been designated for 1921. It should be noted in considering these units, however, that none of them fully answers for a modern playground. Those in the two parks should be better planned and laid out with reference to other park interests. The playgrounds at the present time disfigure both areas needlessly. The playgrounds at the two schools, Allen Street and Christiancy, while serving splendid districts, have hardly sufficient space. These play areas should be permanent and for that reason it is

recommended that certain additional space now available adjacent to these schools be secured for play purposes. The addition of a small tract to each of the school grounds in question would bring each to approximately two acres, which is a well-established minimum for the size of playgrounds.

In Oak Park a playground has been maintained for 1921, but this location, in view of the value of the park as a park, cannot be wholly approved. It is suggested, therefore, that the playground in Oak Park be considered temporary and that an entirely separate new playground serving this same district be created. For this there are several sites available at the present time. The Industrial School offers ample space for a playground which would be located nearer the center of the district now served by the Oak Park playground. There is also considerable unused space in the interior of the block lying between Saginaw, Pennsylvania, May and East Park Terrace that could be transformed into a very satisfactory interior playground. This property should be acquired, for if properly developed it would be one of the most economical uses of land space in the city.

The remainder of the playground sites specified above may be divided roughly into two classes; those which should be established immediately, and those which can be developed in the course of time. Playgrounds are urgently needed now at the Walnut Street School, at the Cedar Street School, at the Franklin Avenue School, at the old Kalamazoo Street School, and in the district now served by the Cherry Street School.

The present grounds of the Walnut Street School, chiefly because of the location of the old school building, are hardly sufficient for thoroughly satisfactory playground work. Reconstruction of the school building is contemplated, however, and when this takes place the new building may be so located as to release a larger area for the playground. The School Board, by purchasing adjacent property, also may add to the present play area.

The Cedar Street School is a splendid site for a playground because it stands in the midst of a large surrounding school population. The general character of the district also emphasizes the need of a convenient playground. The yard of the Cedar Street School, however, is very cramped and not to be enlarged without considerable expense. The necessity of a playground in this district is so strong, however,

that it is suggested that property be purchased in the interior of the block between Cedar, Larch, Wall and Ash. About two acres of open space is available here. The service which a playground in this location would render its surrounding district would soon justify the acquisition of the space.

At the Franklin Avenue School there is already a fair sized yard, but the location of the building makes it not altogether suitable for playground uses. A permanent playground is urgently needed at this school, however, and in order to provide sufficient space for it in the future, the School Board should commence the acquisition of surrounding property. If taken at once several parcels amounting to about one acre could probably be secured now.

It is practically impossible at the present time to find space in the neighborhood of the Cherry Street School to serve as a playground. The nearest possible site is to the west of River

Street between Spring and Hazel and the Cedar River. If this tract can be secured it should be converted at once into a playground.

A playground also is badly needed on the grounds of the old Kalamazoo Street School. Space here is not available now but will be at some future time when the old school building is abandoned. The need of a playground at this site is so pronounced that it would seem advisable to consider the space in the rear of the new intermediate school for no other use. Enlargement of the present enormous intermediate school building should not be made until this problem of providing adequate playground space for this district is thoroughly considered. The only other way of meeting the playground needs of this section is by the establishment of such service at the Logan Street School, which cannot satisfactorily be done without enlarging the grounds of this school.

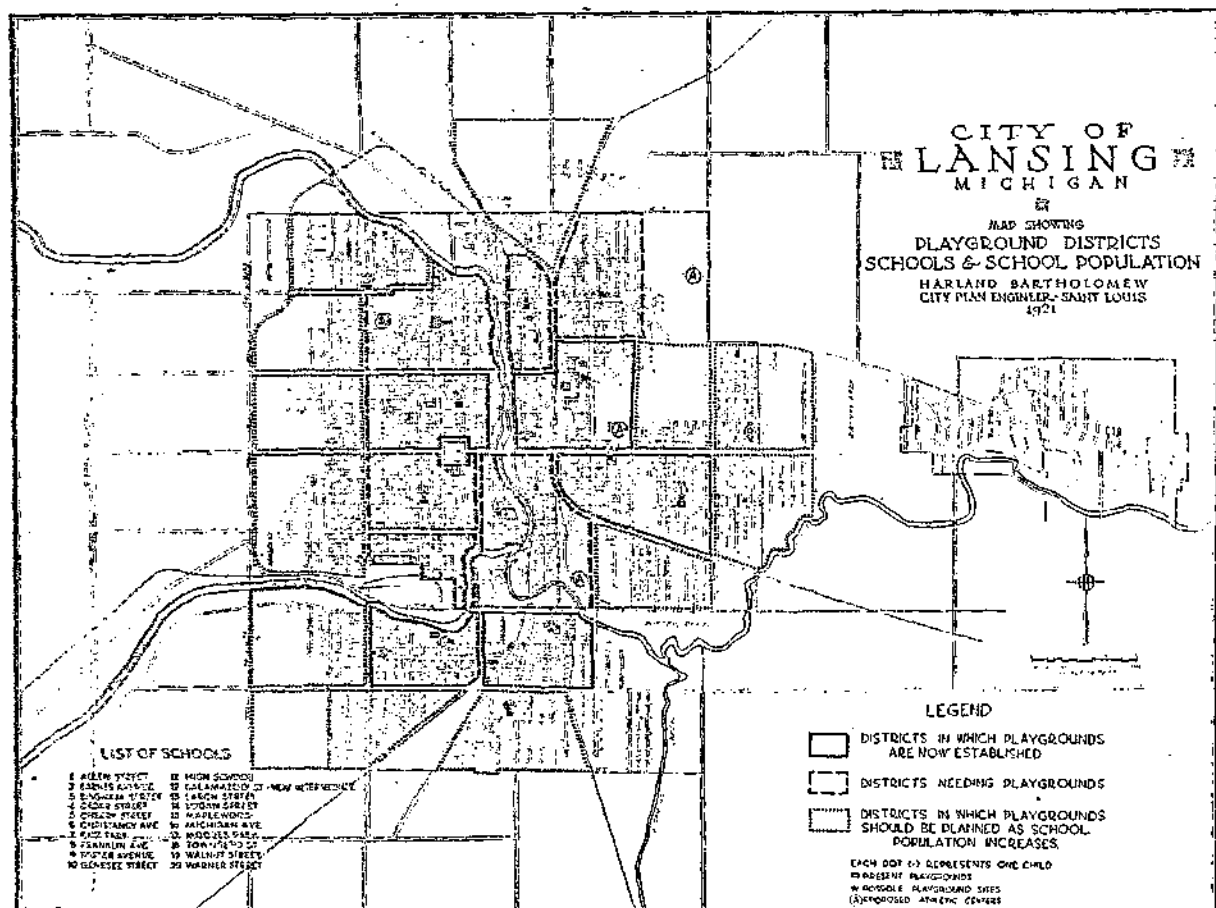


Plate No. 12

With those playgrounds already established and by the development of additional ones in the districts noted, practically the entire area of the present built-up city will be given playground service. There are outlying areas, however, which are rapidly being built up and which in the course of time will come to need playgrounds. A number of these districts are shown on Plate No. 12 but no specific recommendations are made as to the locations of individual units. It should be mentioned, however, that space is already available at both the Warner Street and Barnes Avenue school and on property in the eastern part of the city which has recently been given to the city for school and playground purposes by Mr. Mark Clifford. A sketch plan has been prepared for this latter property as an indication of the orderly arrangement which should prevail on all new school grounds. See Plate No. 13.

In the building up of a thoroughly serviceable playground system in Lansing, a considerable sum of money will undoubtedly have to be spent. There is such a high value in playground instruction, however, that large expenditures for the establishment of permanent recreational facilities of this type are justified. It should be the aim of the Board of Education in assuming the responsibility for this particular activity to equip the present city with playgrounds properly located and to lay plans for the extension of these facilities in present undeveloped territory. The cost of providing Lansing at this time with playgrounds and of preparing for the city's future growth can meet with no serious objections when the service rendered is thoroughly understood.

### Community Centers

The School Board of Lansing, moreover, has an opportunity to provide the equipment for the community center activities of the city. School buildings with swimming pools, gymnasiums, branch libraries, auditoriums, and club rooms are being built in many cities of the United States now as part of a new educational policy which recognizes other forms of education than those commonly associated with school rooms, desks and black-boards. The adoption of the policy of building schools adapted to the wider use of the community will be well in keeping with the spirit of progressive municipalities. The more a city assumes the responsibility of providing for the wholesome

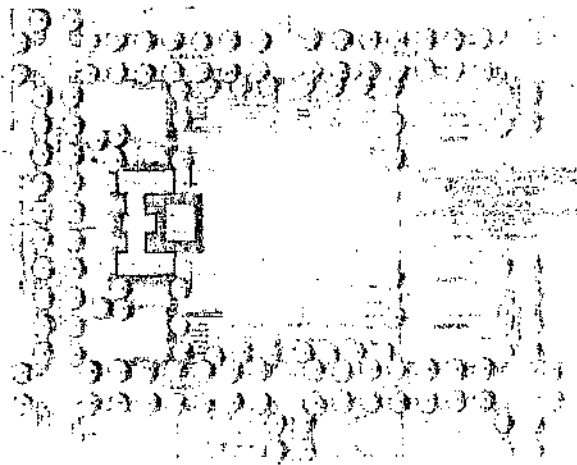


Plate No. 13

recreation of its citizens, the greater will be the returns in health and good citizenship.

### Playfields

For the provision of facilities for more active play, such as games, sports, tournaments and the like, the Park Board must be held responsible. This phase of public recreation has not yet received all the attention deserved from the city. Instead of attempting to concentrate tennis courts, foot ball fields, swimming pools, baseball diamonds and croquet lawns in one small park, as is done at Oak Park, there should be certain areas, aside from these neighborhood parks, developed exclusively for such uses. A suitable space for the development of an extensive playfield is at present available in the neighborhood of the new Elm Street bridge. A sketch plan is shown illustrating how this area may be developed. See Plate No. 14.

Areas similar to this can be found in other sections of the city. They are indicated on Plate No. 12. These playfields can be developed exclusively for games and sports and by their attraction thus relieve the quieter parks in residential districts of the disturbances which usually attend such active play. Given a series of such playfields, it should not be difficult, with the proper park organization, to have each year a series of park athletic teams competing with each other for individual and team prizes. The benefits which would accrue to the city through having this number of young men withdrawn from enervating indoor resorts cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. The city would find its investment in such facilities amply repaid in the course of a few years.

## Parks

Just as there is coming to be a distinction between playgrounds proper and playfields, so in the modern park system differentiation is made between what are known as neighborhood parks and the larger, more naturalistic, outlying parks. A neighborhood park is a park of moderate size, situated as near as possible to a thickly built-up section. Such parks, because of their accessibility and size, usually have a very intensive use. The character of their development consequently is of great importance, for they must be made one hundred per cent useful and yet retain a large measure of that natural quality which makes them attractive rest places for the neighborhood.

Oak Park and Moores Park in Lansing are good examples of a neighborhood park. An examination of Plan No. 15 will show the locations of these parks and the districts which they may normally be expected to serve. This map, moreover, will indicate the great need of similar areas in other sections of the city. Only approximately one-eighth of the population of Lansing is convenient to these two neighborhood parks. The result is that both of them have been improved to provide too diverse recreational facilities and that the small squares, Central Park, Ferris Park, and Durant Park, are subjected to a usage to which they are not well adapted. The correction of this condition

is a task to which the Park Board should early direct its attention.

Owing to the fact that the districts not now served, but much in need of neighborhood parks, are already thickly built up, the acquisition of sites for such parks in the central portion of the city is practically impossible. Plan No. 15, however, indicates certain neighborhoods in which it might be possible to secure the space needed for a neighborhood park. These parks are shown on the Comprehensive Plan. At least twenty acres, which is the size of Oak Park, should be acquired for a recreation ground of this character. The possibilities of purchasing property for these parks in the districts indicated should be investigated at once. The aim of the Park Board in building up an adequate series of neighborhood parks should be to locate them in such a way that their districts, each approximately one mile square, cover the entire area of the city. The neighborhood park service which is suggested in Plate No. 15 will give a good indication of the standard distribution of these areas.

The Board of Park Commissioners may find it difficult at this time to acquire the property to round out the park facilities of the present built-up city. In this case it should be the aim to provide the future city, which is to grow outside the limits of the present one, with parks of this sort properly distributed. The needs of the larger city should be anticipated. The need of foresight in reserving space for recreation facilities cannot be too strongly emphasized.

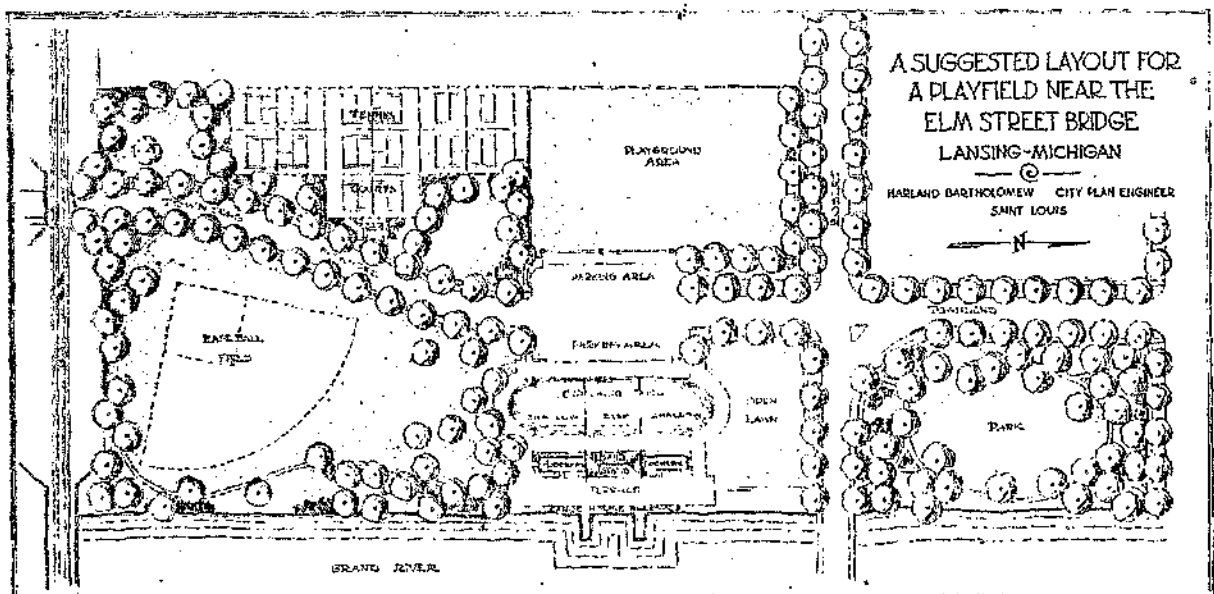


Plate No. 14



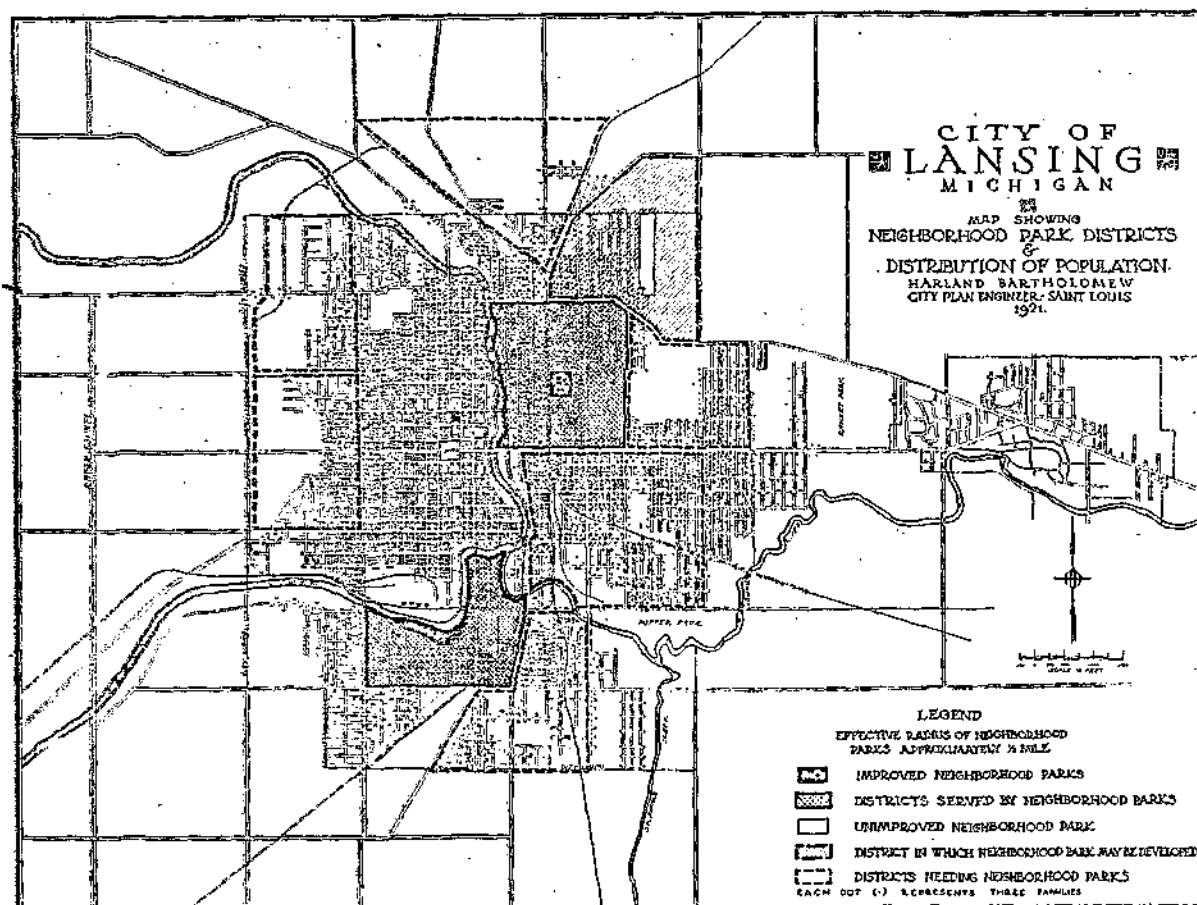


Plate No. 15

### *Riverside Parks*

It is in the reservation of its river views for public use and in the linking up of these reservations by means of pleasure driveways that Lansing's greatest park opportunity lies. The possibility of a chain of beautiful river parks and drives cannot but stimulate the imagination. Present park possessions along the river which would form the nucleus of such a splendid system are quite familiar: Potter Park, 77 acres of native woods and unsurpassed river views; Moores Park, smaller but none the less attractive; Francis Park, at present a trifle too far from the city to warrant intensive development, but an area of extraordinary possibilities and finally Moores River Drive, 3½ miles of a pleasure way already built along the river. With these parks as a start it should not be difficult for Lansing to extend this chain of recreation grounds so as to take in ultimately all available park sites and view points along the

river within the limits of the present city. The opportunity is obvious.

Execution of a plan for the gradual development of a chain of river parks and driveways should commence at once. Unless plans are promulgated for the reservation of river banks for public use, the city will soon find that they have been preempted for refuse and filth and unsightly structures. The capital city cannot afford longer to sacrifice the distinctive charms of the two rivers on which the city was founded.

But how may Lansing make the greatest progress toward the realization of this comprehensive park scheme? Clearly one of the first duties of the municipality should be to secure a certain control over the river banks through the central section of the city. It is extremely unfortunate that the capital of Michigan should have been laid out and built with so little regard for the scenic possibilities of the river. The tone and character which might have been given the city by large stream-side



A view in Potter Park, illustrating the unparalleled charm of this park.



Moores Park—one of Lansing's most delightful pleasure grounds.

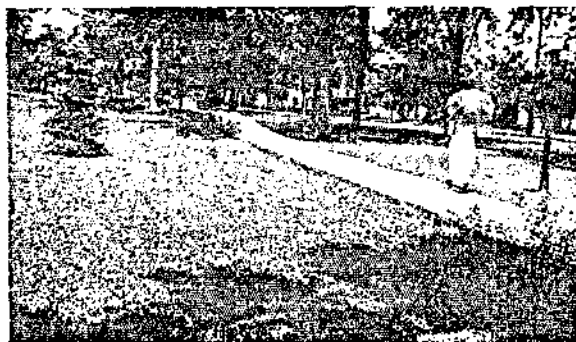
reservations is noticeably lacking. The belated establishment of control over river banks, even though no drives be placed along them, would permit the city to redeem much of their lost attractiveness. It may even be seriously proposed that the city gradually acquire, as individual pieces of property come upon the market, the entire section between River Street and the river on the west bank, and between the New York Central, Mill Street and the river bank on the east side, south of Michigan Avenue. There is no question that once this property was acquired and developed as a park Lansing would have a distinctive feature at its very center that would make it a great deal more like a capital city.

Other sections of the river should not be so difficult to acquire. As may be seen by reference to Plate No. 16 there is already a considerable portion of the river view reserved for public use. At the present time, however, the advantages which the city enjoys through possession of Moores River Drive are endangered through the inability of the city to direct the development of the opposite bank. This situation prevails also at Potter Park. An urgent matter for the Park Board to consider, therefore, is the establishment of control over both

sides of the river wherever this control is essential to the scenic value of present park property. The means by which the Board of Park Commissioners may do this are as follows:

(1) For the Park Board to secure, in the platting of land adjacent to the river, a street or driveway parallel to the bank which would permit the Park Board to acquire the strip between this new street and the river. Such an arrangement would make it possible not only for the Board to control the development of the river bank but also permit the owners of property fronting the river to improve their lands in keeping with the river outlook. Such a method of insuring the proper development of the river bank is feasible opposite Francis Park. Plan No. 16 will illustrate in detail the form which this improvement might take.

(2) By securing from the owners an agreement to keep as much of the river bank as is needed for scenic purposes in a certain stipulated condition, or to permit the Park Board for a period of years to have maintenance rights over this property. It would be entirely feasible to effect such an agreement with the Grand Trunk Railroad for the long strip which lies between the railroad right-of-way and the river opposite Moores River Drive.



Durant Park, an extremely attractive downtown breathing space.



Central Park, another downtown breathing space.





The new shelter house in Potter Park.

By means of ownership or control and co-operation it is possible for the Park Department to maintain and preserve the character of the north river bank opposite the entire length of Moores River Drive. The River Drive will have doubtful scenic value as long as the opposite bank is in danger of being mistreated.

Moreover, in connection with these improvements it should be mentioned that as the city grows southwestward a greater amount of care and attention should be expended upon the River Drive. With the exception of the few parcels of high class residential property west of Logan Street, the entire strip between the Drive and the river bank should be under the control of the Park Department.

Particularly is it desirable that the structures immediately west of the Logan Street Bridge be removed. At an early date also the Park Board should continue the good work already begun in rehabilitating the river bank by forcing the removal of all decrepit boat and canoe houses. The city should provide such structures and rent them. It can then be assured of their proper location and design.

Funds also would be well spent in improving the city property opposite Moores Park. In substance, all areas which are immediately



Bathing in the pool at Oak Park. Lansing needs many features of this sort really built for bathing purposes.

across the river in the line of direct outlook from parks or park drives should be given a certain park-like character. By planting, the Park Department can correct ugliness and protect the scenic assets of public river drives.

The principles which have been outlined above apply with equal force to river conditions at Potter Park. Here, however, the problem is less difficult. The Park Board certainly should own a strip opposite this splendid park which would forever secure its wonderful river views.

The utilization of river banks for recreational purposes also should be extended. Preliminary surveys have already been made of the Cedar River between Potter Park and East Lansing with a view to the establishment of a pleasure driveway in the valley. So far no definite action has resulted, largely because of flood tendencies. Complete detailed studies of the area, however, are not at present available so it cannot be said definitely that the construction of such a driveway is impossible. From hasty observations it would seem that the Park Board might well secure control over a strip along both sides of the river and attempt to construct, parallel to the stream-bed and following the higher ground, a driveway which



A glimpse of the proposed park tract east of Holmes Street, north of the Pere Marquette.



A natural park south of the city, waiting to be taken and held for use by the future citizens of Lansing.

would join the Agricultural College campus with Potter Park. It might be found that this driveway would be subject to overflow in the Spring but if it were not of permanent material it could not be greatly damaged. There are many examples of park drives being maintained under similar conditions. Such drives can be made extremely attractive; in many cases they are the only economical utilization of such areas.

All attention should not be concentrated, however, upon developments of this sort in the southern section of the city. The aim should be to extend a connecting series of pleasure driveways round the entire city. Particularly on the north there should be a native woodland park and river drives. Such riverside areas are shown on Plate No. 16.

### *Pleasure Driveways*

On this plan also may be traced the line of a series of boulevards and parkways which

would unite all the principal parks of the city. The details of this comprehensive scheme may be studied intimately on the map mentioned. A theoretical arrangement of streets is also shown to illustrate the manner in which pleasure driveways, major, and minor streets would be interwoven in the territory lying outside the present city limits.

It must be understood in interpreting Plate No. 16 that it is subject to revision and is not intended at this time as a precise scheme by which park sites or the boulevards and parkways connecting them may be definitely fixed. The closely built-up character of the central section of the city precludes any attempt to establish a completely satisfactory connecting chain of pleasure driveways through it. A boulevard plan of high order must be worked out largely in outlying, undeveloped areas. In preliminary plans, therefore, there is no disposition to fix accurately the location and direction of driveways, or the size and disposition of possible park tracts. Plate No. 16 must

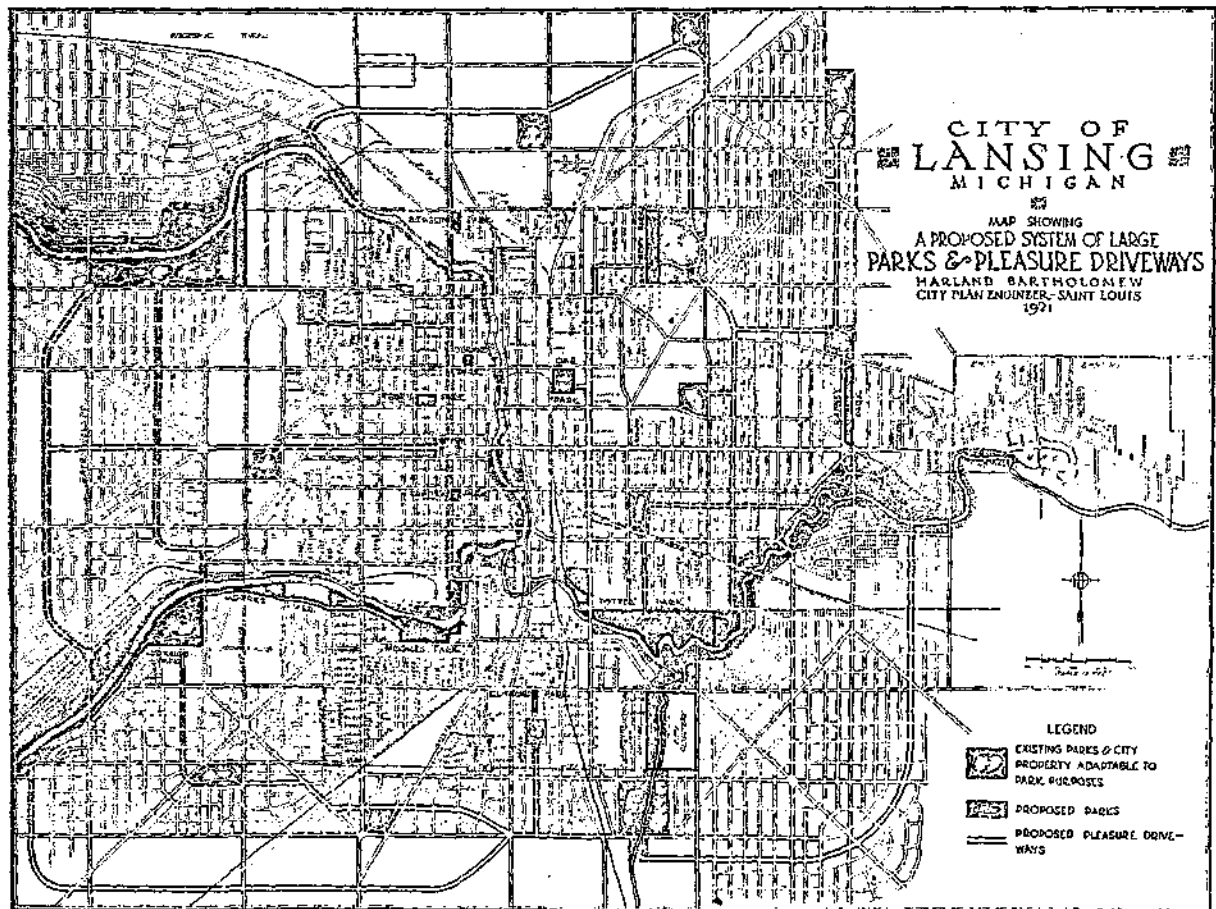


Plate No. 16

be understood consequently as chiefly a preliminary scheme in which the general character of the park development to be sought by Lansing is indicated. The main lines of the system and the most desirable disposition of units are shown. The plan reveals possibilities and should result in further study, more definite proposals and eventual action.

In the preparation of the plan mentioned the difficulty of realizing projects of this sort after the city has been built up, has been kept constantly in mind. Consequently considerable effort has been made to effect the most desirable co-ordination between the major streets or the heavy traffic thoroughfares and those which would be laid out primarily for pleasure purposes. In studying the plan, it will be observed that occasionally these two kinds of traffic ways are brought together for purposes of crossing railroads or the river and for other obvious reasons. In the actual building of the city it may be frequently argued that pleasure drives such as are shown on Plate No. 16 and the major traffic ways were an unnecessary duplication of streets. Such would not be found the case, however, in actual use of these thoroughfares. The character that must be given the pleasure drive system in order to keep it harmonious with the park areas which it joins, prescribes a limit to the use of these driveways. Heavy traffic should be excluded from pleasure drives. In certain cities, however, this exclusion has frequently proved troublesome because the city failed to provide the essential major streets over which this heavier traffic might move. There must be complete co-ordination of these two types of specialized thoroughfares.

As an outgrowth of this differentiation between major streets and pleasure driveways, it has been found possible to designate a number of prominent intersections as sites for important buildings, monuments and other decorative features. These the city now lacks. The fact of its being the capital is little reflected in street embellishment. The incorporation of more diagonal streets in the city plan frequently provides triangles which can be improved and treated artistically so as to contribute, far more



A view from Moores River Drive illustrating how the uncontrolled development of the opposite bank may mar the attractiveness of the drive.

than their original cost would indicate, to the general appearance of the city. It should be the aim of the City Plan Commission and Park Board, therefore, in directing the development of streets in accordance with these plans to have as many of these small ways and parks as set aside for public use as possible. It should be borne in mind though that the city should have some say as to the size and shape of these small parcels. Microscopic fragments at street intersections are of no particular value as pleasure grounds or embellishments. Plazas, squares and the like should be large enough to contribute to the dignity of the city.

The possibilities of realizing all the projects here outlined depend largely upon the initiative of those who henceforth will control the city's growth. In the case of the boulevards and driveways indicated in the present undeveloped territory it may be possible for the city to secure them without the expenditure of municipal funds. Merely by the promulgation of plans and a certain co-operation among those who lay out and subdivide property, successive lengths of these driveways may be added to the system. It will reasonably be expected by those who so subdivide their land and follow the plans as desired, that the agency which is promoting the plan is acting in good faith and will see to it that others act in the same spirit. Genuine co-operation among all those whose interests affect the growth of the city will eventually result in definite accomplishments. Proper direction of this co-operation, however, is essential.

## Transit

### *Transit Service in the City*

Before the day of the automobile the street railway was the chief agency which encouraged cities to expand. Transit facilities permitted people to live farther from their places of business or occupation, away from the noise, heat and dirt of the city proper and on more desirable and cheaper land. The automobile has affected the influence of street railways, but notwithstanding the great increase in the number of these carriers most cities are still dependent upon street cars for local transportation.

A comparison of Plate No. 17 with Plate No. 18 will illustrate the relationship of transit service to the present city of Lansing. The distribution of population reveals the influence of the several transit lines. Fully eighty per cent of the residents in Lansing are within a quarter of a mile of a transit line. This distance is a generally accepted standard by which the efficiency of transit service is measured. The Time Zone Map, Plate No. 19, further shows how far, in certain districts people can live from the center of the city and still be nearer in point of time than other localities much closer in but not having the benefits of transit service.

Being so influential and so closely related to the city's life and development, transit service must necessarily be considered in plans for the future. To direct the growth of an efficient transit service the needs of the larger city must be clearly visualized. Many of the present difficulties under which utilities are working today are due to their inability or the inability of the city to anticipate growth and consequent needs. Having in mind the future development outlined by a comprehensive city plan and zone plan, a policy of expansion can be adopted for transit service with reasonable assurance that whatever improvements are made will be to the best interests of all concerned. It is recognized that an operating company cannot be expected to furnish service in undeveloped territory or to some isolated industry, park or residential district. Other means of transportation must be employed until development has reached a point to warrant an extension or a new car line. Whenever extensions or reroutings are proposed, however, they should be judged in their relation to the final transit scheme and to the general city plan. With a clear understanding of the aims of the general

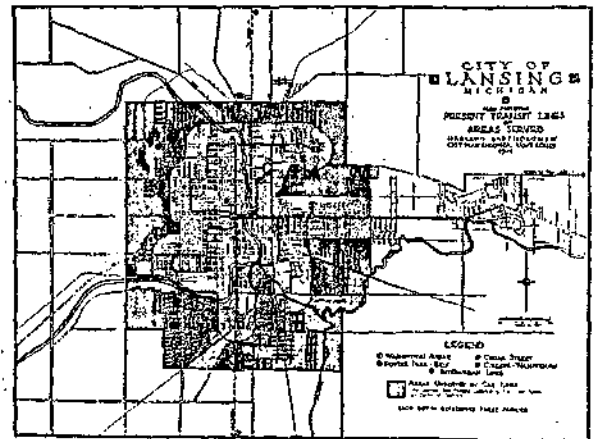


Plate No. 17

plan and its ultimate objective it should not be difficult gradually to evolve a transit system which will function properly and meet new requirements as they arise.

### *The Transit Plan*

In arriving at the transit scheme presented here, several principles have been adhered to, namely:

1. Through-routing and balancing of service;
2. Use of major streets where feasible;
3. Intercommunication between centers of activity;
4. All new track to be a part of the ultimate scheme;
5. Use of present trackage where possible.

Through-routing eliminates terminals or stub ends in the business district, thus reducing congestion on the streets by providing for a continual movement of cars. It also eliminates transfer points on the busiest street corners by giving an overlapping of service. Lines which serve similar districts and are expected to carry an equal amount of traffic should be joined so that operating schedules will be adapted to the needs of each district served. A through line, one end of which taps a well built-up neighborhood and the other serves a newly developing, sparsely settled region, must maintain a schedule based on the needs of the more populous end of the line. There is service wasted consequently on the new district.

Major streets, because of their location, continuity of direction and ample widths are the

logical carriers of heavy traffic. They are designed so that a transit line can be accommodated without detriment to the movement of other traffic. Adhering to the major streets, transit lines will also benefit by such improvements as grade crossing eliminations and adequate river crossings.

Where it has been possible, direct service has been provided between various sections of the city. In smaller cities it is practically impossible to maintain cross town lines. The bulk of travel is to and from the central part of the city. The lines of the Lansing Plan have been allocated so that where direct crosstown service cannot be given, convenient transfers may be made with intersecting lines.

The scheme has a flexibility, furthermore, which permits of such extensions and re-routing as the city's growth will demand, and at the same time involves no unnecessary abandonment of trackage as changes in routing are made. Where possible the tracks now in place have been used as part of the ultimate scheme.

Where track abandonment has been recommended, such as on Pine and Butler Streets, it is probable that such changes will not be necessary for several years to come. In that event the equipment will be worn out and ready for replacement. New track should be laid to conform to a more orderly system.

Aside from the city lines interurban cars from Jackson, St. Johns, and Owosso use the city streets. Although this is not objectionable, in so far as passenger service is concerned, the movement of freight trains through the downtown district should be discontinued during the hours when the volume of other traffic is heavy. Despite the extreme widths of the streets, these trains of four and five cars are a source of great inconvenience and danger, even at the present time. These freight trains now are operated in violation of a city ordinance. Their elimination from the heart of the city should receive serious thought. Suggestions for the accomplishment of this are considered in the plans which follow.

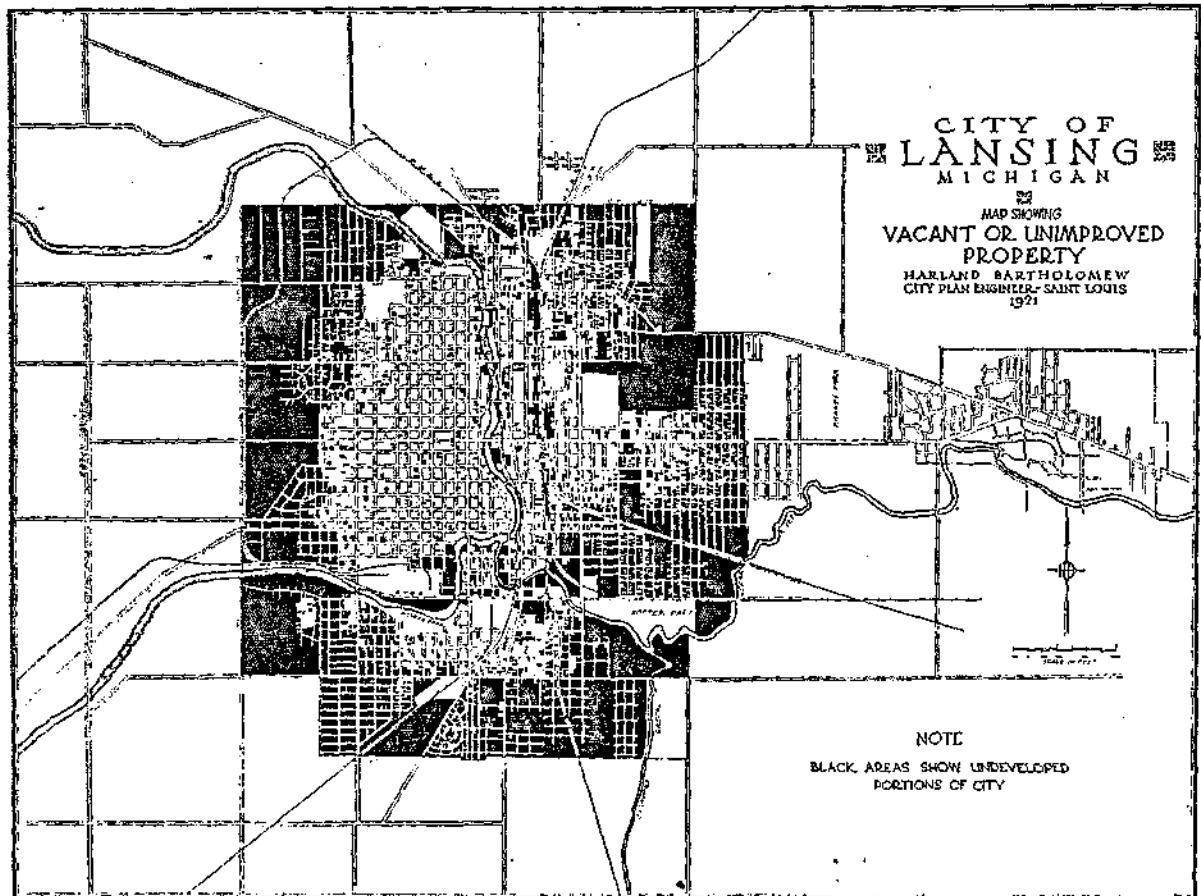


Plate No. 18

The method of loading and discharging passengers in the middle of the street in front of the waiting room on East Michigan Avenue, moreover, must be supplanted by a more convenient and safe method. As the city grows and traffic and schedules become heavier the conflict between interurban and local service will become more pronounced. A greater separation of interests will be necessary. An interurban terminal centrally located and convenient to the Union Depot and city car lines should be constructed. The logical location for this building is shown on Plate No. 21.

### *Lansing's Larger System*

Plate No. 17 shows present car lines in relation to the distribution of population and the area within a quarter of a mile of each. It is evident from a study of this plan and from a knowledge of Lansing's growth in the past few years (see Plate No. 20) that several extensions will soon be needed.

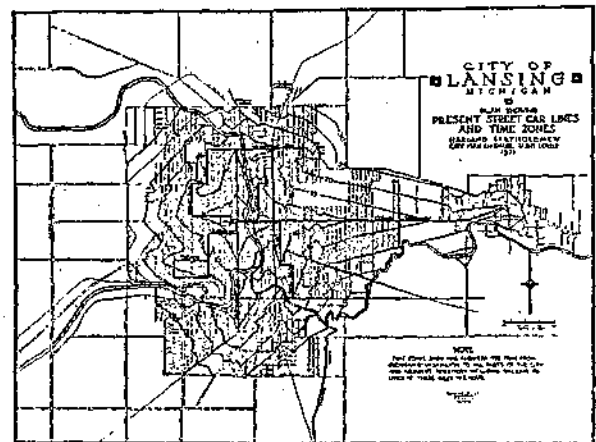


Plate No. 19

This pace which the growing city sets for the street railway company suggests general anticipatory planning for transit facilities. An organization which renders such large service to the community as does the street railway company cannot remain inactive while the city

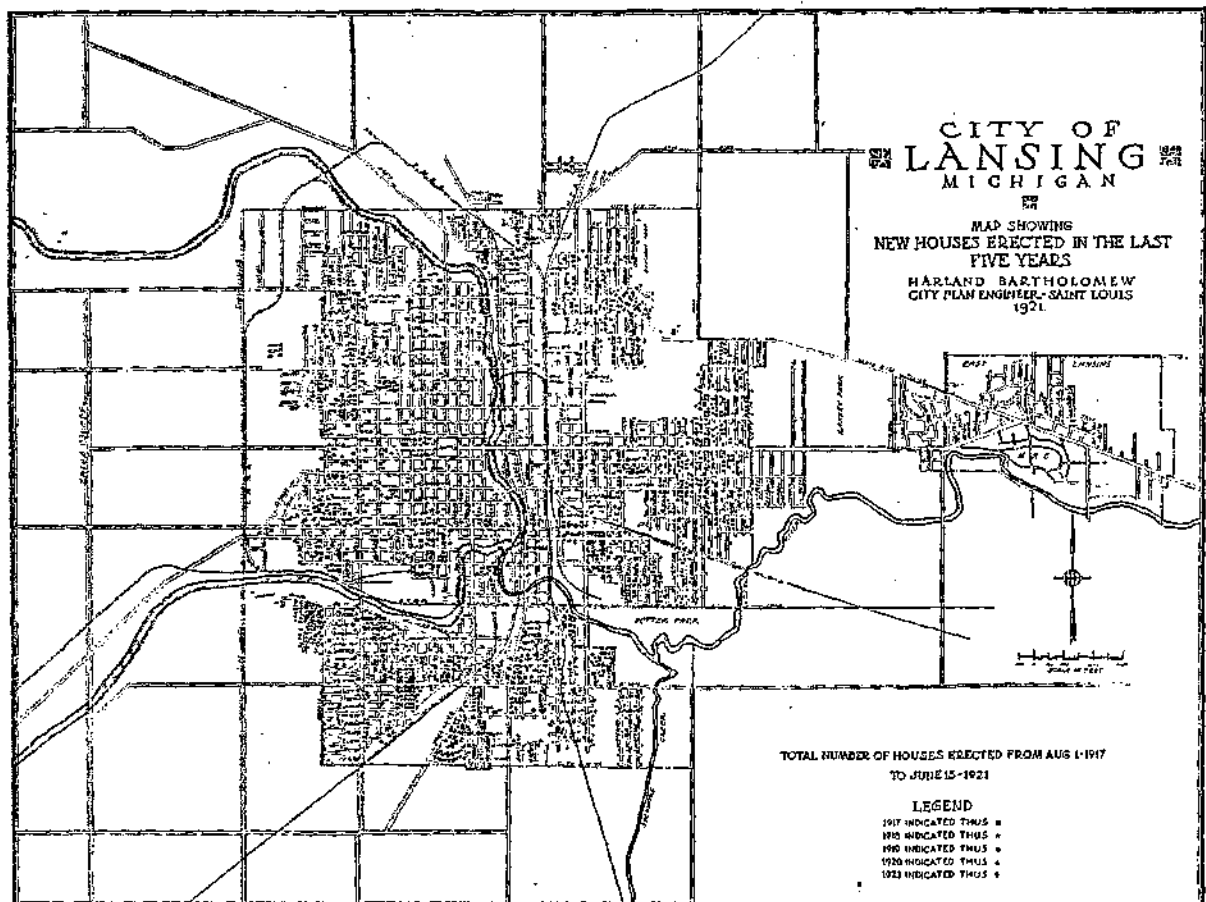


Plate No. 20



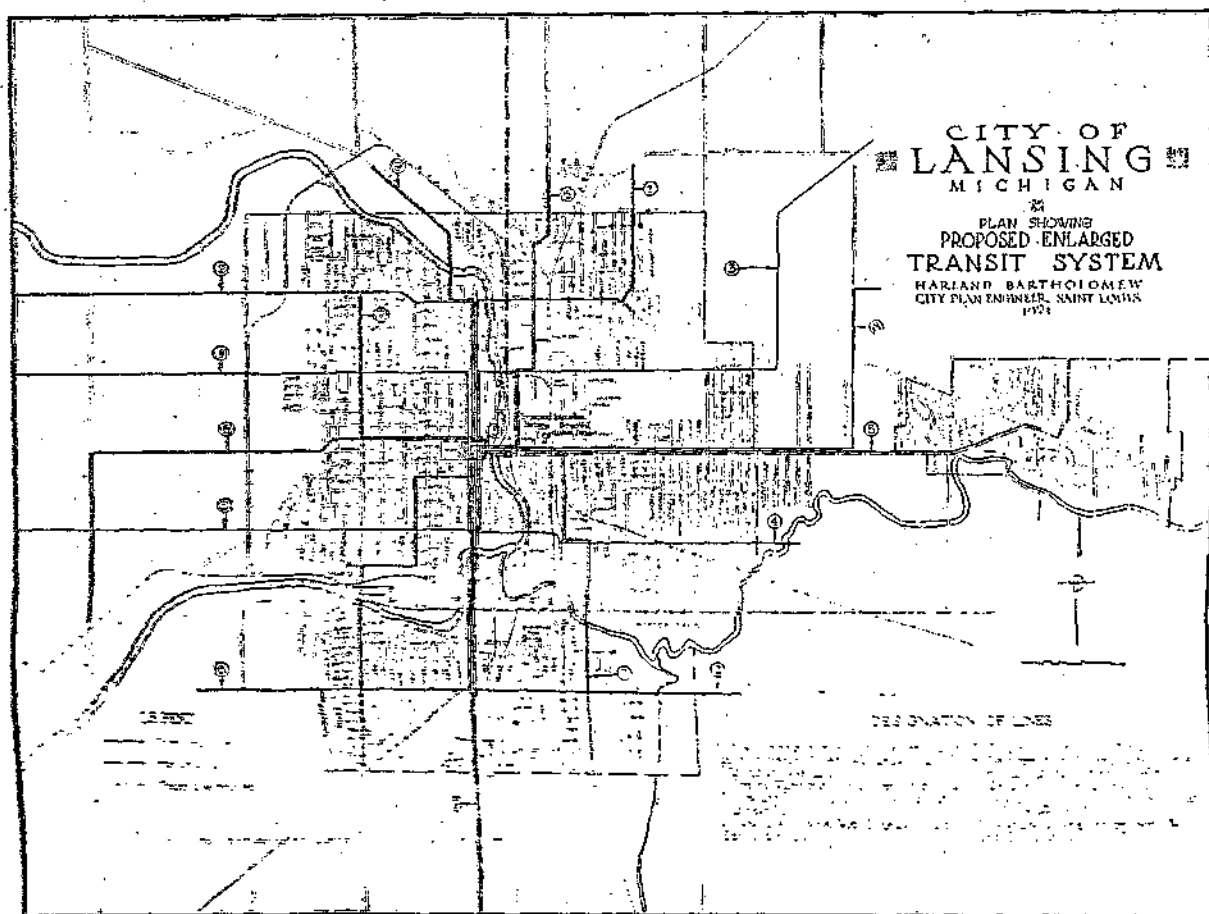


Plate No. 21

attempts to build a structure that will adequately care for an increasing population. Urban transportation agencies must grow along orderly, scientific lines and in harmony with the whole of the city's growth. An isolated improvement here and there and piecemeal betterment will not suffice. A certain complete transit objective should be outlined and each successive change in the system, regardless of where made or how important, should be related to this ultimate plan.

Such an ultimate objective is shown, Plate No. 21. While this scheme is designated as the "ultimate," it merely represents a stage in the development of the street railway system of the growing city. As long as Lansing grows there can be no final layout of transit lines.

The merit of the "ultimate" scheme presented, however, is in its flexibility. It is so devised that from it extensions may be made in any direction without danger of complicating operation. All the essential districts and all important objectives of the present city are fully served. To such a point as is represented

by the system outlined in Plate No. 21 the transit facilities of the city should always be shaped.

A suggested series of steps leading to the ultimate layout of lines is shown on Plate No. 22. Section A of the plan mentioned shows present street railway trackage. A gradual revision of lines, based upon the needs of the city as determined by growth, must commence with a utilization of existing equipment. The first step (B, Plate No. 22) in the development scheme, consequently, indicates merely a grouping of certain improvements based on the minimum abandonment of track and the least disturbance of existing operation. These changes may not all be undertaken at once as they are shown, but in their relation to a further development of the system and to the ultimate scheme they are consequently grouped as a first step.

A new line is made to run out Ottawa, to serve the new western industrial district. Present trackage will be utilized to Butler Street. The present Cedar Street line should operate

directly through the city and consequently is shown forming this new line.

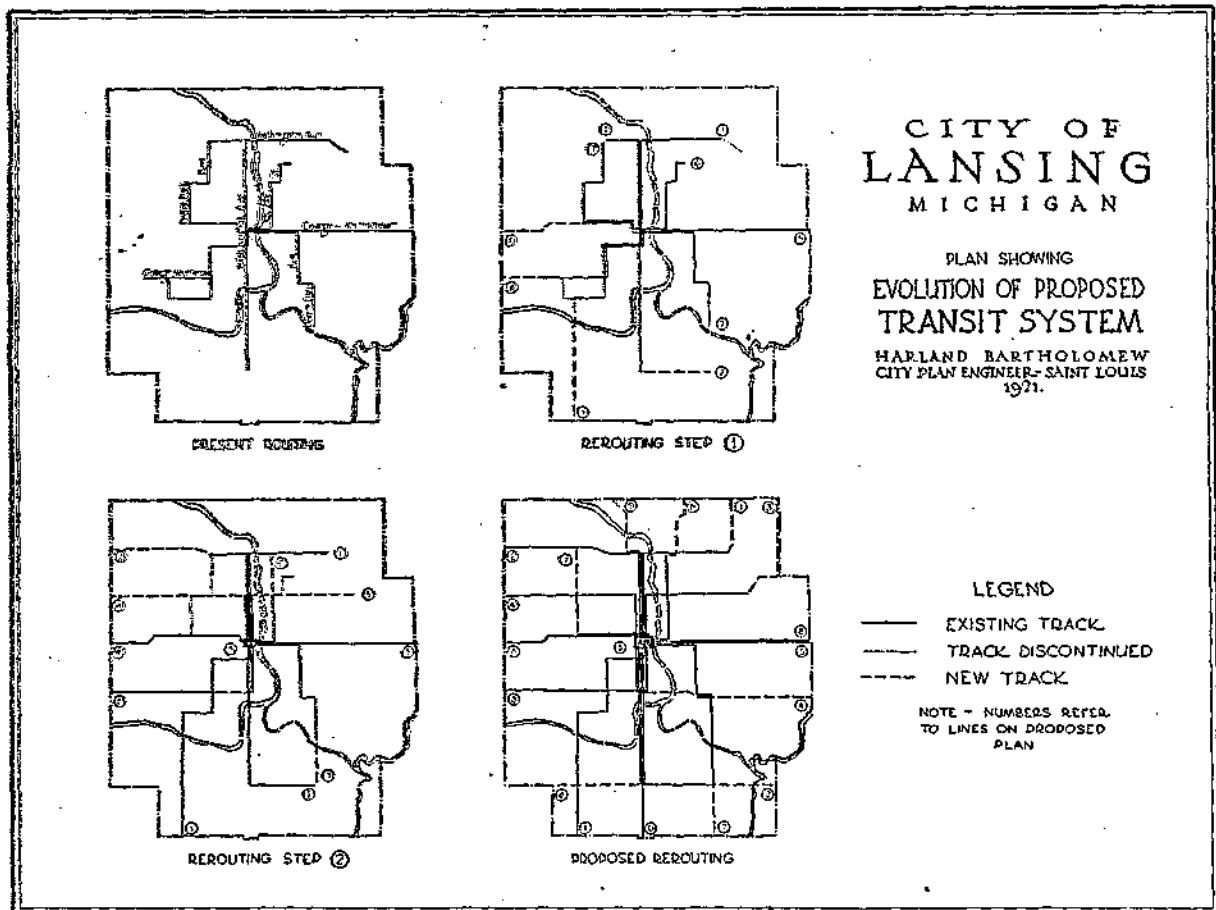
Another utilization of trackage is possible through extension of service over St. Joseph Street, on the Waverly Park line. To form this line the present College cars should be used. If service on the west section does not need to be as frequent as that to the College, a portion of the College cars may short loop at the capitol. It is recommended in this connection that a downtown loop embracing Grand, Ottawa, Capitol and Allegan Streets be created and that as soon as possible all tracks be removed from Michigan between Washington and Capitol.

For service to the rapidly growing residential districts south of the city two extensions seem necessary. One is shown southward on Logan Street from the present line on Isaac Street and the other is a continuation of the Washington line eastward on Mount Hope. For a more systematic operation into these new territories, the rerouting inaugurated by the breaking up

of the College-Washtenaw line is continued. It is suggested that the present Washington Avenue line operate west on Franklin to Pine over track already in, the Belt line stopping at Franklin. This would make the Washington line render primarily a residential-business center service. A uniform schedule could be maintained throughout and extensions at either extremity could be made easily.

The Washtenaw line, to serve South Logan Street and the Olds plant, should serve a center on the other side of the city equally as important. It is suggested, therefore, for the sake of more systematic and economical operation that this line also run north on Washington to Franklin and turn eastward on Franklin over the present route of the Washington line. Such a routing would give this line well balanced opposite service areas, would add to the service on the main business street and would put it in splendid position to grow.

The remaining lines of the system shown in step one would continue as at present except





that at as early a date as possible interurban freight service should turn east on Mount Hope and enter the city over the present Potter Park line.

The extension of the Potter Park line to Mount Hope to make rerouting of interurban freight possible is shown in step two (C, Plate No. 22). In this stage of the readjustment of transit facilities it would seem desirable to make the first serious disruption of the present system. The Potter Park-Belt line that now operates with doubtful efficiency should be reconstructed so as to serve a larger territory. Moreover, there should be afforded greater opportunity for east and west crosstown movement. The two lines on Franklin will have provided service of this character in the northern section, but to supplant them there are proposed two new lines operating on Saginaw Street. The one to the west should be linked with the Potter Park line and the one to the east should displace the College line to Waverly Park. The College line because of its character would seem to answer all requirements quite as well by looping in the downtown district. All other lines would be tributary to it there. The Cedar Street line could well be extended in this stage to Franklin Avenue, thus providing, with the Potter Park line, a measure of north and south crosstown service.

In the third step, all existing lines having been rerouted to form an orderly system, only

new lines and further extensions are considered. If it seems desirable to establish crosstown service south of Michigan, this may be afforded by a new line east on Main which should operate as a through line north on Washington and west on Saginaw. The Potter Park line thus displaced on Saginaw may be again introduced as a north and south line on Logan Street north of Ottawa. In this position it will offer cross connection between the east and west lines serving the western industrial territory and be also located admirably for full crosstown service on Logan Street should demands for this service arise. Similar crosstown connections in the south are suggested by a line which would run west on Mount Hope, meeting the eastern Mount Hope line at Washington. The complete scheme of operation of all these new lines and extensions is fully shown on Plate No. 21.

The development of the city at the date which this system anticipates, cannot possibly be foreseen, so it is suggested that the transit facilities outlined be studied primarily for the principles which they exemplify. It will be noticed that there is a systematic organization of lines, a full distribution of service with concentration where population will doubtless warrant it. The lines are "through," crosstown service is provided without impairment of service elsewhere and without loss of revenue and the major street system is fully respected.

## Transportation

### *Present Railroad Problems*

The problem of eliminating grade crossings and properly arranging terminal facilities is one which demands attention in any thriving city. As a city grows and its traffic increases, grade crossings on its main thoroughfares seriously retard the movement of vehicular transportation and consequently reduce the city's commercial and industrial efficiency.

In attempting to devise a satisfactory scheme for grade crossing separation, it becomes necessary to consider an ultimate scheme of development which would lead itself to gradual accomplishment. As new permanent construction takes place the city should attempt to eliminate those grade crossings which are the most dangerous and pronounced handicaps to traffic movement.

The waste due to the duplication of railroad lines and facilities within the city is becoming more and more pronounced as the city grows. In modern city building it is recognized that unification of lines and terminals is not only highly desirable but essential to modern business requirements. In some cities, however, the arrangement of tracks and terminals are such that it would involve a large expenditure to combine all track and terminal facilities. Local conditions must prescribe the manner of introducing order into railroad operation.

### *Transportation Facilities in Lansing*

The City of Lansing is served by four railroads, namely, Michigan Central; Pere Marquette; New York Central; and Grand Trunk Railroads. The Michigan Central Railroad enters the city from the north and passes directly southward through the city. It handles most of the local traffic, having approximately

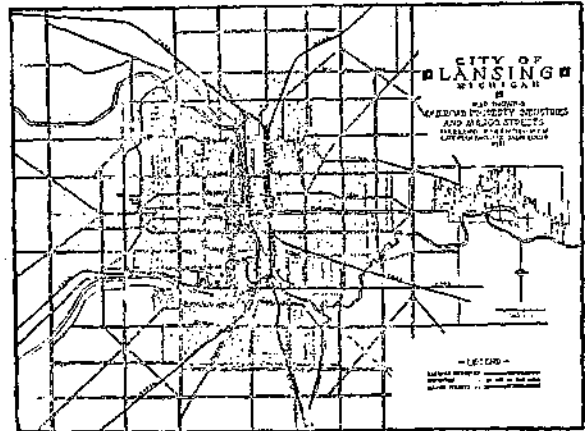


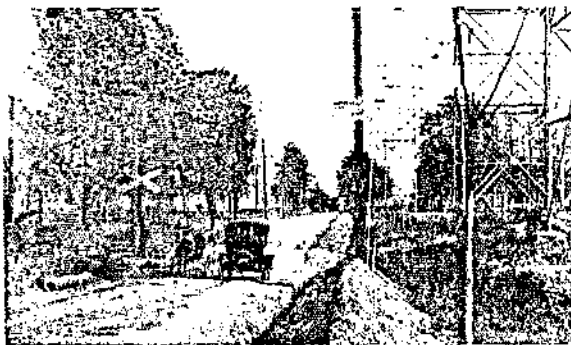
Plate No. 23

thirty freight trains and sixteen passenger trains passing through the city daily.

The Pere Marquette enters the city from the northwest and joins the Michigan Central just north of Franklin Avenue. From this point south to Prospect Street the Pere Marquette and the Michigan Central occupy a joint right-of-way. From Prospect Street the Pere Marquette operates southeast through the city, crossing the Grand Trunk line at Trowbridge just beyond the city limits. This road handles about twelve passenger and twenty freight trains daily.

The New York Central Railroad enters the city from the southwest, crosses the Grand Trunk Railroad at grade, and follows the Grand River as far north as Beaver Street, its present terminal. This road does the least business, having but two passenger and four freight trains daily.

The Grand Trunk Railroad enters the city from the west at a point about one mile south of Michigan Avenue and operates directly east



A view of a dangerous crossing on Mt. Hope Avenue. This crossing is particularly bad because the view of approaching trains is cut off on practically all sides.



The New York Central depot, and the abuse of what might be an extremely charming river view.

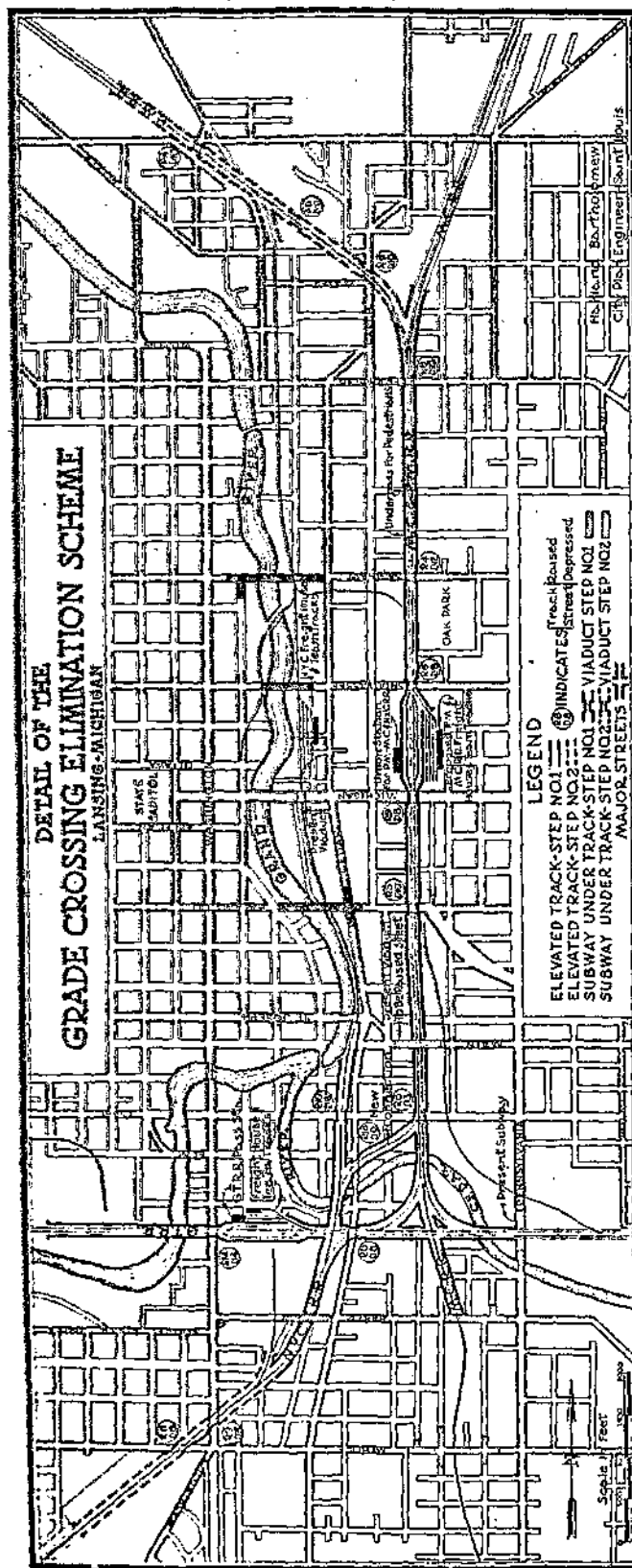


Plate No. 24

through the city and crosses the Pere Marquette Railroad at Trowbridge beyond the city limits. The Grand Trunk handles approximately thirty freight trains and twelve passenger trains daily. Its local business is light in comparison with the other roads, as it has no access to the belt line and apparently no working agreement with the other railroads by which it can receive freight from local industries.

The Belt Line is a railroad originally built by the manufacturers of Lansing and later acquired by the Michigan Central, which road apparently now controls its use. The Belt Line originates at the General Motors plant, parallels the Grand Trunk Railroad to the city limits, follows the western city limits northward, and joins the Michigan Central Railroad at a point just north of the northern city limits as shown on Plate No. 23. The Belt Line serves a very useful purpose, although its lack of connection with the Michigan Central and the New York Central at its southern terminus necessitates a very long haul for freight originating to the south and west of the city and destined for the new Michigan Central and New York Central freight yards.

The joint right-of-way of the Michigan Central and the Pere Marquette railroads, and also the southerly extension of the Michigan Central, bisects the city just east of the business district. Free access to the business district from the eastern section of the city, including the City of East Lansing, is greatly hindered by grade crossings. The present Belt Line at the western city limits also serves as an impediment to the expansion of the city to the west.

### Grade Crossing Elimination

The method of eliminating most of the grade crossings must necessarily be a combination of track elevation and street depression. In some instances, however, it would be more practicable to use viaducts. The topography of the city and the grades of the railroads are such that it would be difficult in most cases to eliminate any single grade crossing by means of elevated tracks and subways without including a number of other crossings in the near vicinity.

Step No. 1.—In order to make the grade elimination scheme possible of accomplishment, it is proposed to eliminate the crossings in two grade separation schemes. Those which are most urgent and included under Step No. 1, (See Plate No. 24) are as follows:—Franklin Avenue, Saginaw Street, Shiawassee Street, Michigan, Kalamazoo, Hosmer, Pennsylvania, Main Street, Hazel, Elm, Cedar and Washington Avenue. Under Scheme No. 1 the Michigan Central Railroad would elevate its track from Drury Lane on the north to Baker Street on the south; Pere Marquette would elevate its tracks from Pearl Street on the north to Jones Street on the south; the New York Central would elevate its tracks between Main Street and Isbell Street, and the Grand Trunk elevation would extend between Pennsylvania Avenue on the east and Pine Street on the west. Under scheme No. 1 it is also proposed to construct new viaducts over the New York Central Railroad at Saginaw, Shiawassee and Kalamazoo Streets. The elimination of these three

grade crossings could be accomplished when new bridges are constructed over the Grand River, and could be constructed separately without affecting the general scheme of track elevation. The present bridges are somewhat delapidated and should be replaced in the very near future.

At present crossings are separated by viaducts over the New York Central Railroad at Michigan Avenue; Michigan Central Railroad at Main Street; and Grand Trunk Railroad over Pennsylvania Avenue. Simultaneously when the Michigan Central tracks are elevated under Step No. 1, it will be necessary to raise the present viaduct at Main Street approximately five feet in order to conform to the new track elevation. The general scheme of grade crossing elimination will not, however, affect the present grade separation at Michigan Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Step No. 2.—The grade separation by means of elevated tracks and subways which could be made individually and at some future time are as follows: Muskegon Street—Pere Marquette

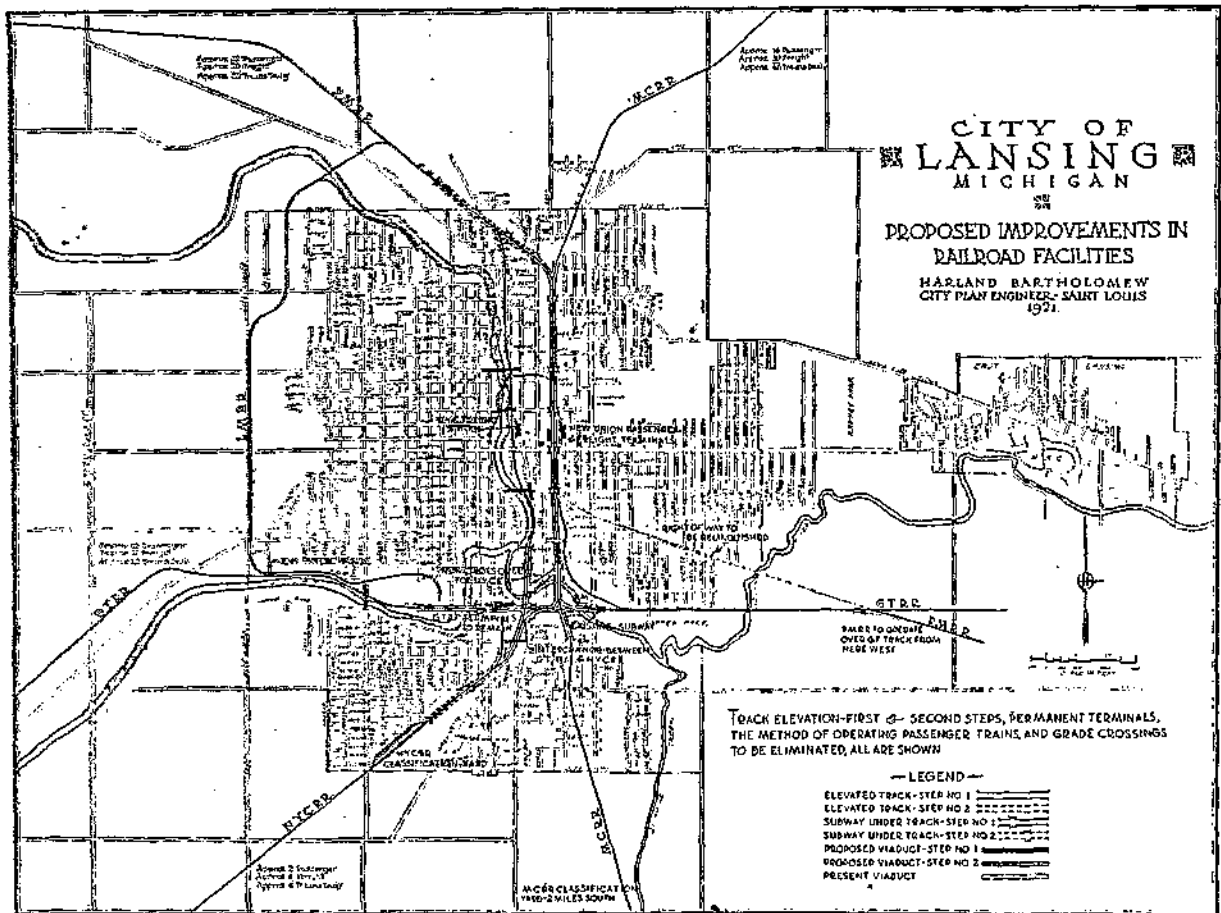


Plate No. 25

Railroad; Muskegon Street—Michigan Central Railroad; Larch Street—Pere Marquette Railroad; Saginaw Street—present Belt Line; St. Joseph Street—present Belt Line; Logan Street—present Belt Line; the crossings at Mt. Hope Avenue, Washington Avenue, and the New York Central Railroad would necessarily have to be made simultaneously.

The proposed viaducts could also be constructed separately in the order of their importance, which will be determined by the density of traffic upon the streets where they are proposed. The location of these viaducts are as follows: Logan Street—Grand Trunk Railroad; Baker Street—New York Central Railroad; Baker Street—Michigan Central Railroad; Mt. Hope Avenue—Michigan Central Railroad; Clifford Street—Pere Marquette Railroad; and Clemens Avenue—Pere Marquette Railroad.

### *Terminal Facilities*

Union Passenger Station—Lansing now has three passenger stations: one used jointly by the Pere Marquette and Michigan Central Railroads, located just north of Michigan Avenue at their right-of-way; the New York Central station, located just north of Michigan Avenue at the New York Central right-of-way; and the Grand Trunk station located east of Washington Avenue at the Grand Trunk right-of-way.

It would not be practicable for all the roads to enter one union station. This would necessitate a detour of the Grand Trunk Railroad at the western city limits, where it would have to connect with the present Belt Line and operate to the north and join the Michigan Central right-of-way. This would involve considerable extra car mileage.

It would, however, be possible for the New York Central to connect with the Michigan Central at Hazel Street and use the present

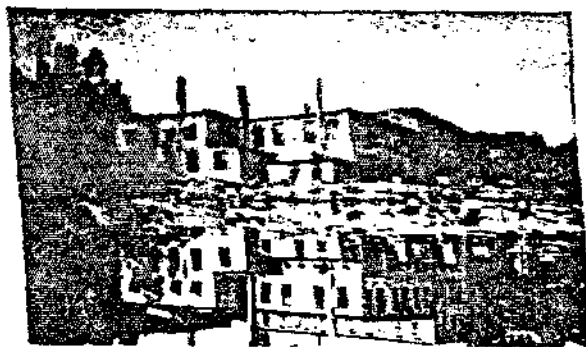
Pere Marquette and Michigan Central passenger station. (See Plate No. 25.) This would enable the New York Central Railroad to abandon their present station. The present New York Central tracks could remain, however, for industry tracks and also to serve its present freight houses and team tracks which could remain at their present location.

### *Freight Terminals*

Freight Houses and Team Tracks—The freight houses and team tracks of the Michigan Central, Grand Trunk and New York Central Railroad may remain at their present locations. The Pere Marquette freight station is located just north of the Union Passenger Station and in the event that the tracks are elevated, provision should be made to re-locate the freight station and the team tracks.

Freight Yards—The freight yards of the Michigan Central Railroad are located about two miles south of the southern city limits. These are now being expanded and there is ample room for further extension. The freight yards of the New York Central Railroad are located in the extreme southwestern part of the city. These undoubtedly will be adequate for some time to come. The Pere Marquette Railroad freight yards are located in the northwest beyond the city limits. There is also ample space for future extension of these yards when the conditions warrant it. At present the Grand Trunk Railroad has no freight yards in or near Lansing, but is contemplating building freight yards in the vicinity of Trowbridge.

Belt Line—At present it would seem desirable and economical, from an industrial viewpoint to make a new connection between the Belt Line and the New York Central and the Michigan Central Freight Yards in order to obviate the long haul which is now necessary



Above of river frontage.



Illustrating how trees and planting may be used to improve an otherwise disreputable river view.

for freight originating along the Belt Line. After considerable study it has been deemed advisable to recommend that an agreement be made, if possible, between the Michigan Central Railroad, New York Central Railroad and the Grand Trunk Railroad for the use of the latter's right-of-way within the city. This would afford a connection between the present Belt Line, Michigan Central and New York Central freight yards, which would require only one back-up.

Because of the character of the land lying between the Grand Trunk Railroad and the New York Central Railroad in the extreme southwestern part of the city, it is not recommended to make a new connection between the Belt Line and the New York Central in this location. This area is partly occupied by the Country Club and the remaining property can be developed into a high-class residential district.

## Lansing's Appearance

### *Value of Civic Attractiveness*

The fact that Lansing is the capital of Michigan gives special importance to a discussion of its appearance. It should have an atmosphere befitting its position. At present it does not have the distinctive character which it deserves. This is due primarily to a lack of public interest in things which represent civic refinement. The founders of the city laid it out according to a very ordinary, conventional pattern. This heritage of commonplaceness has never been overcome and the city's growing industrial prominence will constantly make the task more difficult. There is sound reason for asking, therefore, what may be done to add to the neatness, order, attractiveness of Lansing. Concern about appearances in the city is ever an indication of the city's spirit.

The justification for this concern lies in the almost universal but frequently suppressed interest in things that appeal to the eye. Even the much over-emphasized monetary return which has come to be expected of every proposal claiming public interest, has been discovered in civic art. The popularity and actual money value of parks is well known. Visitors are taken to see them at the earliest oppor-

tunity; the show places of the town are the first thought of every proud citizen. A city is "sold" by its so-called beauty spots.

Men have learned how to make art and beauty and attractiveness pay. The seller of real estate adds to the price of a lot because it is so situated that he can point to the dignity and character of nearby homes. The automobile manufacturer aims to produce a car of pleasing proportions. Power and speed alone will not sell his cars. Similarly, a city must give thought to its "design." Mere multiplication of factories and warehouses will not create a perfect city. A city that has even the faintest wish to make itself a place in which men may be proud to live cannot afford to ignore the function of civic art. Because of Lansing's position this should be one of its most vital interests.

### *Lansing's Deficiencies*

As has been mentioned, the founders and the early builders of the city, however, have made Lansing's present task in this field difficult. The city today, which is the result of their labors and their direction, does not express the important position which it holds in the state and is quite devoid of the interest and charm which it could have had by reason of



The Capitol of Michigan: where is the dignity and impressiveness of such a view as this?





A view of one of the most important schools in Lansing. The barren, factory-like architecture could be overlooked but the building enjoys none of the refinement of planting and crowds out almost to the street line.

the natural beauty of the site. In the original town plan there was no recognition of its being the political center of the state. Reservation of a central square, four blocks in area, and the platting of streets five rods wide marked the extent of planning for the capitol. There was no generous provision of open spaces for state buildings, no placing of streets for impressiveness, no reservations of native woodland, and no appreciation whatever of the value of the river and riversides as public property. As a consequence of this unfortunate lack of vision Lansing is now a most ordinary city. It is less dignified, less impressive, and less attractive than many of its neighbors. As a capital it is distinctly disappointing; it does not compare with many others in less important states.

It is unfortunate that the capital of Michigan should be thus characterized. Yet the facts are obvious. The abuse of the river in the central section where it is most frequently seen is commonly lamented. Lansing's loss through this mistreatment is quite generally appreciated. With one exception, the passenger depots of

the city are unworthy. The orderliness and neatness of the Grand Trunk terminal group is in striking contrast to the other stations. The appearance of the downtown district is likewise without distinction. Property owners on Michigan Avenue and near the capitol have had no appreciation whatever of the value of an impressive view. A miscellaneous assortment of architectural styles and building heights further aggravated by a motley display of blatant signs and a system of antique street lights create a characterless picture. Something of an unusual and distinctive public building group was started when the Post Office and the City Hall were built, but these buildings are now seen to be too crowded and their effectiveness diminished through improper development of surrounding property.

The state itself has been negligent in its regard for appearances. It has spent a great sum of money building an office building of imposing proportions on a site much too small and too remote from the capitol. It is unfortunate that both Lansing and the state should have missed the opportunity to create a great group of state buildings.

The Board of Education likewise has fallen short of a standard Lansing had a right to expect. Many of the school buildings are not only cheap in architectural effect but cramped for exterior space. The Public Library and High School occupying the same plot, none too large for the latter alone, is a familiar example. The huge factory-like Intermediate School on Lenawee is not to be compared as a school plant with similar schools now being built elsewhere. The new school on Jerome is far more in keeping with modern standards; schools of this type will give the city character.

The streets and home districts are ordinary, in no way reflecting the importance of the city.



Capitol grounds in winter.



Street trees have given certain of the older sections a very pleasing atmosphere, but there is not enough tree planting being done in the newer sections. Poles and wires frequently take the place of trees entirely. These overhead utilities and billboards intrude themselves upon the eye and destroy the results of careful treatment of home grounds. The flagrant disregard of building lines by corner stores further damage street views.

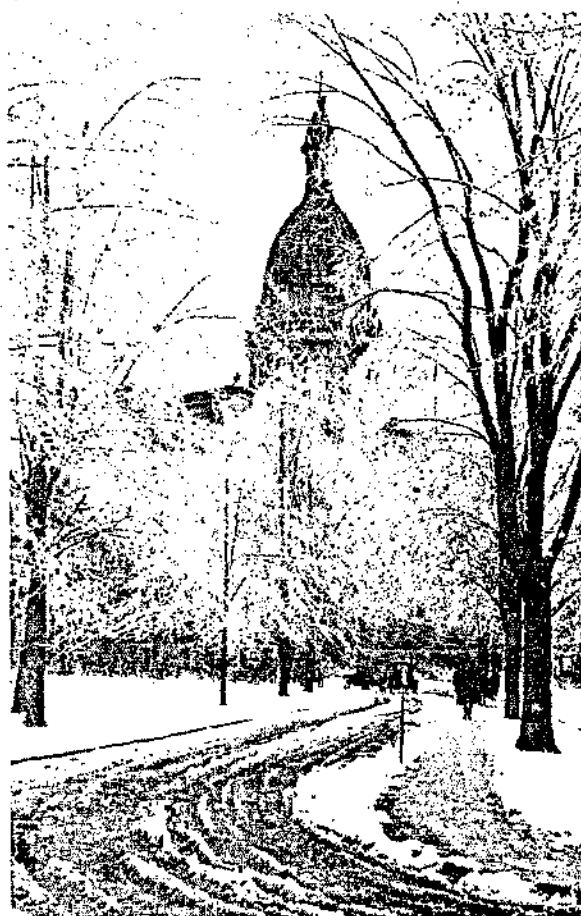
These points are but the more obvious which come to the attention in estimating Lansing's regard for appearances. To some extent the impression which these features create is offset by others distinctly of a more favorable class. One cannot but note the splendid start which the generosity of individuals has given Lansing toward a park system of more than ordinary distinction. It remains to be seen whether the city as a corporate body realizes the value of this beginning and carries forward the reservation of riversides and natural park lands.

Mention must also be made of efforts of certain realtors to give Lansing subdivisions embodying the more advanced principles of land platting and development. In their maturity, with trees full-grown, the streets lying with some regard for the contour of the land, the homes built according to a standard, these districts will be a credit to the city. The enforcement of a zone plan will do a great deal to protect such sections from industrial blight, such as has developed west of the city through the introduction of the constructive industrial belt.

If Lansing, the capital, wishes to rise above the character which its industries are likely to impress upon it, it will have to exercise a far greater interest in things that appeal to the eye. The effect of industrial growth is almost universally ugliness, lack of character, monotony,



A view of the type of fire stations now being erected in residence sections. The selection of such a style for buildings of this sort is hopeful evidence of an appreciation of both attractive and useful public buildings.



View of the Capitol showing the effect of the foil of trees.

and an oppressive uninspiring scene. The city can do much to counterbalance this effect. Being the capital and as well a very prosperous industrial city, it can well afford to make the city's appearance a special interest. There is point, therefore, in outlining the possibilities in this field.

### *Opportunities to Improve Lansing's Appearance*

By a careful direction of its future growth Lansing may yet incorporate in its plan many features which were overlooked in the earlier days. The new growth which Lansing undoubtedly will experience in future years offers splendid opportunity for the creation of a more distinguished and characterful appearance. The development of many wide, heavy traffic streets, the filling of intervening space with subdivisions of varying form and character, the proper grouping of industries, the concentration of commercial buildings at important

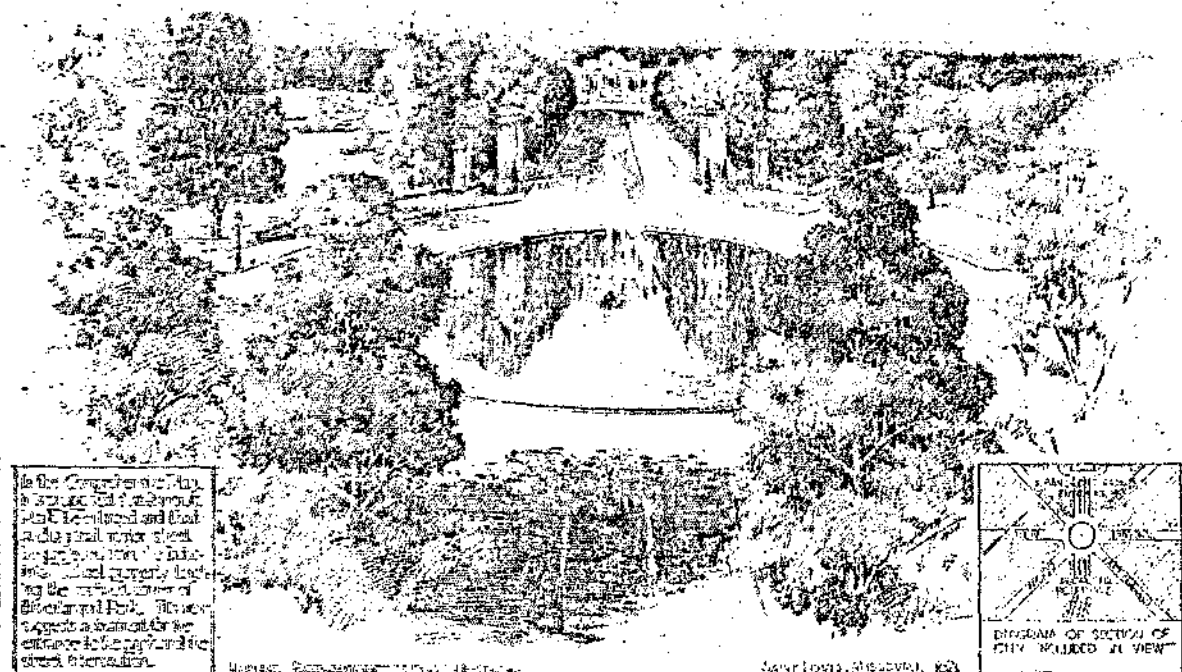


Plate No. 26

corners, all will give Lansing a more orderly appearance. The building of a modern, functional system of streets will furthermore make available a great many small squares, plazas, courts, and the like which, if properly treated, will do much to offset the unavoidable artificiality and monotony of city growth. The view, Plate No. 26, page 50, will show a possibility of this character.

Of greater service in this respect will be a properly distributed system of parks. If Lansing can develop its recreation facilities henceforth according to a well studied, progressive plan, the city in twenty years will present a greatly different appearance, one much more befitting the capital. These opportunities, together with such others as the elimination of grade crossings and the uniting of railroads and terminal facilities, the construction of new bridges, particularly if they are all carried forward with an eye to their ultimate effect upon the appearance of the city, cannot but in time produce a notable new growth.

## A Program

The improvement of existing conditions, however, is likely to prove more difficult. A program of action in this field should be formulated and constant effort made to carry it out. It should include the following:

1. The reclamation and restoration of river banks and the acquisition wherever possible of streamside reservations for public use. It should be made known generally to the citizens of Lansing that the river and river views constitute one of the city's greatest assets. They should belong to the people. They should be protected from encroachments and from all interests which would damage their natural beauty. The city should make an effort to acquire piece by piece as it comes upon the market all property which in any way affects the river views. It may be a number of years before the city finally secures complete control of its river but when it does it will own a feature



A street of modest homes planted with young trees uniformly spaced. This neighborhood would be one hundred per cent more attractive if the homes had shrubs planted about them.



Lansing in the early days greatly appreciated the usefulness and value of street tree planting. Prosecution of this work holds great promise of improving the appearance of the city.

which citizen and visitor alike will appreciate and enjoy and value.

Public ownership of riverside property is unquestionably most desirable for bringing back to the river the character which it once had, but in lieu of actually owning the property the city may yet exercise some control over it or induce private owners to develop their holdings according to a general riverside plan. An inexpensive but studied planting of willows and other water-loving trees would probably be made by riverside property owners if the matter were properly brought to their attention. The city itself might even undertake to do this work for the sake of securing a more unified appearance. Any method by which dumping may be prevented, and ugly buildings masked will produce a welcome change in the aspect of the central section of Lansing. The construction of the several new and modern bridges will also greatly improve the river prospect.

2. A more dignified note in the business section is needed. This can be secured by:

(a) The elimination of projecting signs. This may be done by city ordinance. Some

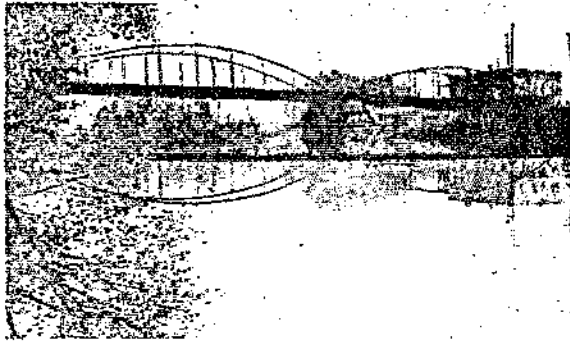
merchants who have no particular interest in the appearance of the city may object to being thus deprived of opportunity to introduce themselves to the public, but if the ordinance is fairly drawn and all are made to conform to the same standards, no hardship is imposed. The removal of these signs will do a great deal to relieve the business section in the neighborhood of the Capitol of its present shoddy appearance.

(b) The installation of a more modern system of lighting. The lights that are at present in use are antiquated and unsatisfactory. Single standard lamps are much more modern. If trolley wires are to be hung from poles, a single bracket lamp will be a great improvement over the system now in use. The aim in making changes in the street equipment should be to secure greater simplicity, orderliness, more restraint.

(c) The removal of all sidewalk encroachments and obstructions. At the present time there are in Lansing many merchants who believe that the public street is available for use as display space. There are also many



The interest of industries in the appearance of the city is well exemplified in these two views showing well kept lawns and planting about factory buildings.



Shiawassee Street Bridge to be replaced with an overhead bridge over railroad.



Washington Avenue Bridge.

stores which have show-cases and rigid awnings that take up space of the sidewalk. The enforcement of a city ordinance keeping the streets and sidewalks free in the business district would add to the appearance of this section.

(d) The encouragement of a higher standard of architecture. With few exceptions the commercial buildings in Lansing are old and unattractive, a great many of them dating from the period which was known in American architecture as the "reign of terror." The capital city should have some interest in developing a more harmonious architectural effect downtown. If the city itself is unable to exert an effort in this direction the matter could well be handled by the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations interested in the improvement of Lansing. The city might offer to remit taxes on the best designed building each year, or prizes might be offered by civic organizations. These are merely stimulants, however; if the builders themselves are interested in Lansing's appearance they will co-operate in the erection of creditable structures.

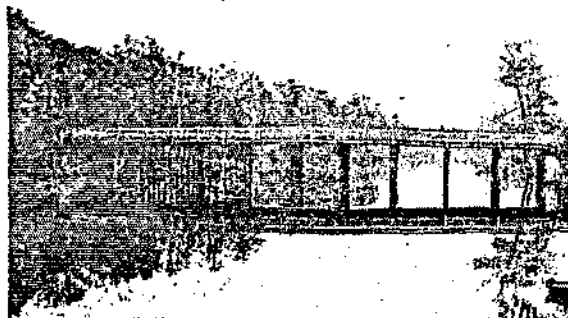
(e) The refinement of the surroundings of the Capitol. The Capitol grounds, while in themselves fairly spacious and attractive, are

yet not as well developed as they might be. A more carefully studied plan of walks and drives, and a better placement of the several statues and monuments are greatly to be desired.

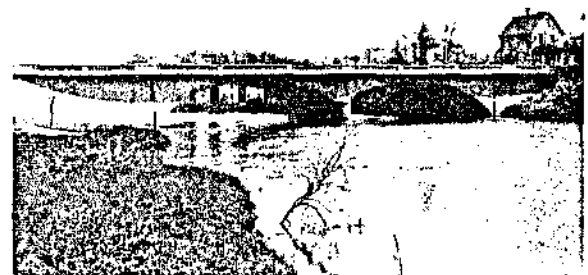
(f) The removal of street cars entirely from Michigan Avenue between Washington and Capitol, and the use of the space so relinquished as a central plaza. A wide, unobstructed view toward the Capitol from Washington and Michigan would add noticeably to the character of the business section. This street is wide enough to give a much more pronounced impression of generosity. Rows of trees might even be planted along this block on Michigan, similar to those which are found on State Street in Albany. The ginkgo or maiden-hair tree is frequently found in such locations, seeming to be able to survive the inhospitable soil and moisture conditions.

(g) The adoption of a uniform type of sidewalk construction. Clean, well-built sidewalks, sharp curb lines, together with smooth, well kept pavements, will add noticeably to the neatness and trimness of the downtown area.

3. Building of more attractive railway and interurban stations. The time seems to be ripe



Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge being replaced with a concrete structure.



Elm Street Bridge, built in 1921

# A SUGGESTED NEW CAPITOL GROUP LANSING MICHIGAN

BARLAND BARTHOLOMEW  
CITY PLANNING ENGINEERS  
CHICAGO, ILL.  
1922.

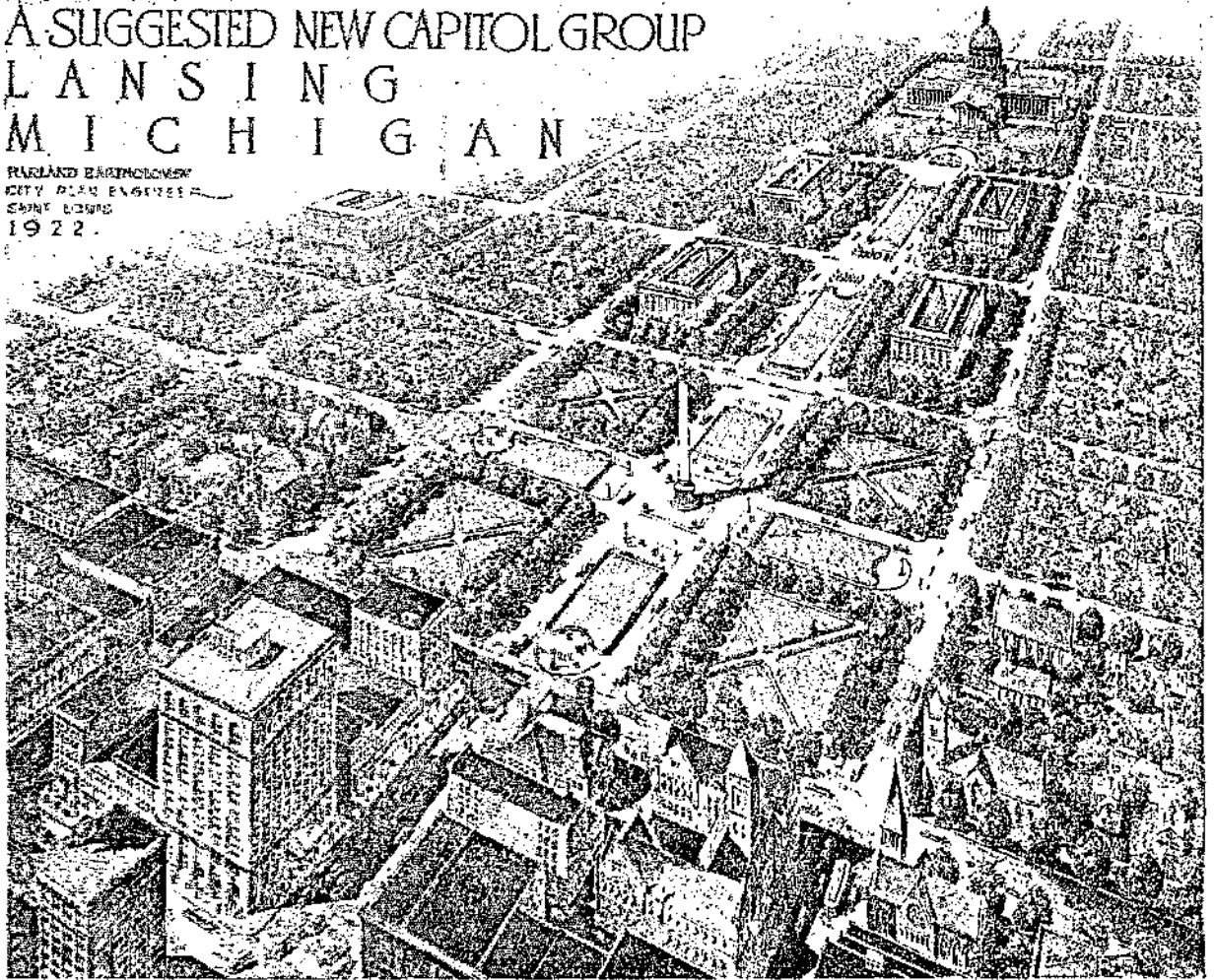


Plate No. 27

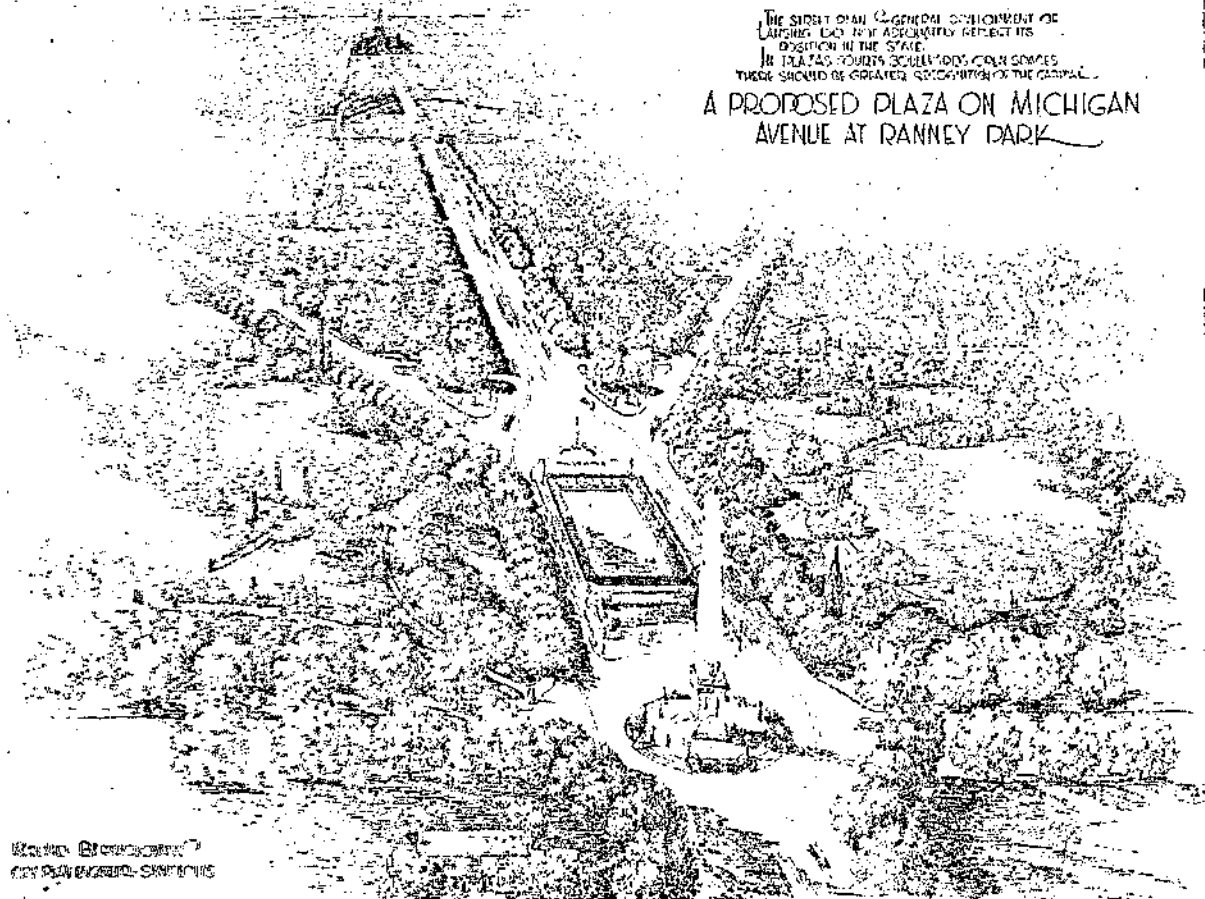
for the construction of a union terminal group close to the business section. A suggested joint site for railroad and interurban passenger terminals is shown on Plate No. 24, page 45. A passenger terminal group in this location offers an opportunity for building a much more impressive portal to the city than may possibly be secured through the building of separate stations. Visitors who arrive in Lansing by interurban certainly deserve better treatment than being dumped out on the street.

4. Encouragement of a wider appreciation of the civic value of dignified and impressive public buildings. It is apparent that heretofore neither those who represent the state at large in the legislative assemblies nor the citizens of Lansing have been especially interested in the possibilities of grouping the great state buildings. Plate No. 27 suggests new and better settings for the state buildings likely to be needed in the future.

The plan disregards the newly erected state office building. As has been noted before, this structure, which represents a considerable investment of the public fund has been shunted off to the side and so located as to be without relationship to the capitol and without setting commensurate with its size and importance. This practice of haphazardly spotting magnificent buildings in the capital city is unworthy of Michigan.

The State of Michigan is not always going to find its present capitol adequate and is very likely in time to need additional office buildings similar to that built on Walnut Street. It would be an obvious service to the people of the state to plan an orderly grouping of these structures in advance of their construction. By adhering to such a plan the state will realize a greater return upon its investment in architectural effect. The buildings of the state are designed to be impressive and representative





THE SKETCH OF AN IDEAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
LANSING, DOES NOT ACCURATELY REFLECT ITS  
POSITION IN THE STATE.  
IN PLANNING FUTURE SCULPTURAL SPACES  
THERE SHOULD BE GREATER CONSIDERATION OF THE CAPITAL.

A PROPOSED PLAZA ON MICHIGAN  
AVENUE AT RANNEY PARK

WALTER G. BROWN  
CITY PLANNING SERVICE

Plate No. 28

of the character of the commonwealth. They lose much of this emphasis when scattered. They become doubly valuable when assembled in a harmonious group.

With this thought in mind, therefore, it is suggested that the future building policy of the state be determined by some such plan as is presented herewith. A state commission should be appointed to confer with representatives of the city on matters of such common interest. For the guidance of discussion of a future capitol group the following program is offered:

(a) Lansing lacks downtown open spaces bearing a distinct relationship to both city and state properties. When the need of a new capitol arises it is suggested that this site be the blocks west of Pine Street between Ottawa and Allegan. A new building on this area can be built without disturbing the old. The pressure of business growth westward suggests a more westerly site for the dominant building of a new group.

(b) The intervening blocks between the present capitol grounds and the new site should be developed as a mall, with subsidiary state buildings ranged on either side.

The acquisition of property for this new group should commence now. Piece by piece may be secured until all the land necessary becomes public property. Such a treatment would provide Lansing with a capitol setting of which the entire state would be proud. It would be but a slow retrieving of an opportunity which the founders allowed to slip in laying out the original city.

5. The educational value of well designed school buildings has also not been appreciated in Lansing. They should be farther from the street and on larger lots. Likewise all schools should have a carefully planned landscape treatment differentiating between the active play areas and planted foreground. The structure and its setting should form a harmonious composition.

6. The erection of more commemorative statues, memorial shafts, monuments, fountains, and similar features expressive of the character of the capital city. The pride which Lansing feels in being predominantly industrial could well be indicated thus. There is place for such embellishments in every well-rounded city. A careful examination of the street plan proposed for Lansing will suggest at once scores of sites for features of this sort. In their incorporation in the structure of the city it is essential only to remember that they should have artistic excellence, should be well distributed, and should be protected as to their immediate surroundings. Plate No. 28, on preceding page, may suggest the civic value of such devices as are mentioned above.

7. The encouragement of more home landscape gardening. Lansing is situated in a climate which is particularly favorable to the growth of trees and shrubs. Beautiful lawns are easily secured and kept. An active campaign conducted by civic organizations would encourage a great deal more work in this field and produce notable results in a comparatively short time. In no other field is the character of the city as well expressed as in the measure of interest taken in private home grounds.

8. Coincident with a movement to improve the appearance of home grounds should also come general encouragement of cleanliness and neatness, particularly on unimproved property. Many vacant lots in Lansing now are used as dumping grounds or are covered with weeds. The enforcement of sanitary regulations and of ordinances requiring weed cutting is strongly to be urged.

9. The removal of signs and billboards from residential districts. The zone ordinance will prevent further erection of these useless disfigurements. Disapproval of adjacent property owners should gradually force the elimination of those already located in residential

districts. Their presence in such neighborhoods in this day of universal newspaper reading can no longer be justified.

10. Placing wires underground or on poles on rear lot lines. A tangle of poles and wires mars the appearance of many Lansing streets. Even some of the newest and finest subdivisions are afflicted. There should be no overhead utilities on the streets of modern land subdivision, and Lansing real estate operators should know this. Trees only should be on the streets.

11. There should be a more widespread planting of street trees. The city should follow the state which has recently by legislative act provided for the planting and maintenance of trees on all state highways. The trees that have been planted on Lansing's streets contribute notably to whatever charm the city now possesses. There is justification in expenditures for their care and maintenance.

Greater effort, however, should be made to encourage additional planting. Especially should it be urged that all new subdivisions be planted when they are laid out. The cost of planting trees on streets at this time, if divided equally among the lots offered for sale, forms but an insignificant portion of the cost of the property. The value of the trees so planted will increase with years.

In the case of older treeless streets, planting could well be done at the time of ordinary street improvement. The cost of such planting chargeable against each lot would in this case also be almost negligible. A uniform, extensive tree planting is the object to be desired and this is not to be secured if the responsibility is left with individual property owners. The finest streets of Lansing are those which many years ago were planted for many blocks with trees of the same variety. An ordinance by which the city may extend its tree planting should be adopted.



## Zoning

### The Lansing Ordinance

The Legislature of Michigan in 1921 passed a law authorizing cities to enact zoning ordinances regulating by districts the use, height and area of buildings, and the density of population. Such an ordinance has been prepared for Lansing. In brief the Lansing zoning ordinance as recommended to the City Council may be described as follows:

It comprises first of all two classes of districts, Use Districts, and Height and Area Districts. In the former, the uses of property are regulated. The latter comprise regulations covering the height to which buildings may be erected and the areas of lots which they may cover.

There are five Use Districts established under the ordinance. They are designated as follows:

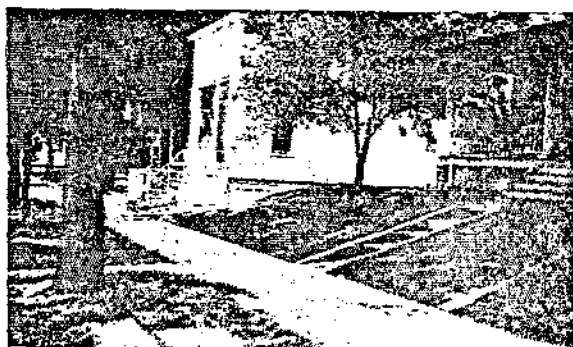
- "A" Residence,
- "B" Residence,
- "C" Commercial,
- "D" Industrial,
- "E" Unrestricted.

In the "A" Residence Districts are permitted only the following uses of property:

1. One and Two Family Dwellings,
2. Churches and Temples,
3. Schools and Colleges,
4. Libraries,
5. Nurseries and Greenhouses,
6. Farming and Truck Gardening,
7. Accessory Buildings including Private Garages.

In the "B" Residence District there are permitted any uses indicated in the "A" Residence District, and in addition the following:

1. Tenements,
2. Apartments,
3. Hotels,

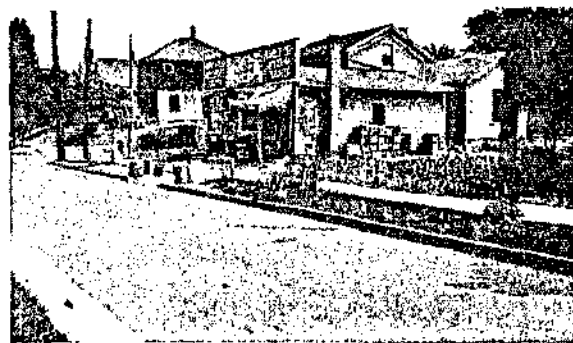


Zoning is a scheme for encouraging these small stores to have a bit more consideration for their neighborhoods.

4. Private Clubs and Fraternity Houses,
5. Boarding and Lodging Houses,
6. Institutions,
7. Accessory buildings not involving the conduct of a retail business.

In the "C" or Commercial District are permitted all uses enumerated in the "A" and "B" Residence Districts and all other uses except those specifically designated as follows:

1. Bakery (employing more than five (5) persons),
2. Blacksmith or horse shoeing shop,
3. Bottling Works,
4. Building Material Storage Yard,
5. Carting Express, Hauling or Storage Yard,
6. Contractor's Plant or Storage Yard,
7. Coal, Coke or Wood Yard,
8. Cooperage Works,
9. Dyeing and Cleaning Works (employing more than five (5) persons),
10. Ice Plant or Storage,
11. Laundry (employing more than (5) persons),
12. Livery Stable,
13. Lumber Yard,
14. Milk Distributing Station,
15. Stone Yard or Monumental Works,
16. Storage or Baling of Scrap Paper, Iron, Bottles, Rags or Junk,
17. Storage Warehouse,
18. All uses excluded from the Industrial District,
19. Any kind of manufacture or treatment other than the manufacture or treatment of



Who would buy the lot and build a home next door to this?

products clearly incidental to the conduct of a retail business conducted on the premises.

In the "D" or Industrial District is permitted any use of property included in the three districts enumerated above, or any form of industry not objectionable by reason of the emission of smoke, odor, dust, gas, etc.

The "E" or Unrestricted District is the lowest classification of the several Use Districts. In the areas so designated are permitted all uses of property except those specifically prohibited by ordinances of the City of Lansing.

Height and Area Districts are designed to supplement the use districts. There are five such districts designated by letter, "A," "B," "C," "D," and "E" Height and Area Districts, the provisions of which are co-ordinated with the five Use Districts. The "A" Height and Area District is designed primarily for one and two-family houses. Two and one-half stories, or a maximum of thirty-five feet, is the height limitation of this district, and the area provisions include the following: Rear yard sixteen feet minimum; two side yards, 3 feet; set-back, minimum, twenty feet; forty per cent of the area of an interior lot and fifty per cent of a corner lot, maximum occupancy; and density of population not to exceed ten families per acre.

The "B" Height and Area District, designed primarily for less intensive apartment houses, carries provisions but slightly different from those of the "A" Height and Area District: Three stories, or forty-five feet, is the maximum height permitted; rear yard, sixteen feet minimum depth; side yards, four feet; set-back, minimum twenty feet, lot occupancy forty per cent for interior lots and fifty per cent for corner lots; number of families limited to eighteen per acre.

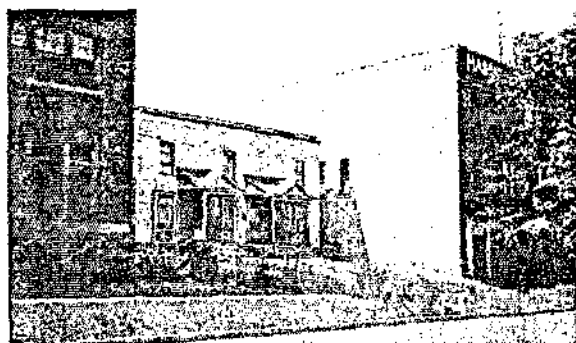
The "C" Height and Area District is chiefly a modification of the preceding district to

permit the erection of more intensive apartment houses. The height limit of this district is sixty feet; the rear yard, sixteen feet minimum; side yards, five feet; set-back, twenty feet; with density of population limited to seventy-five families per acre.

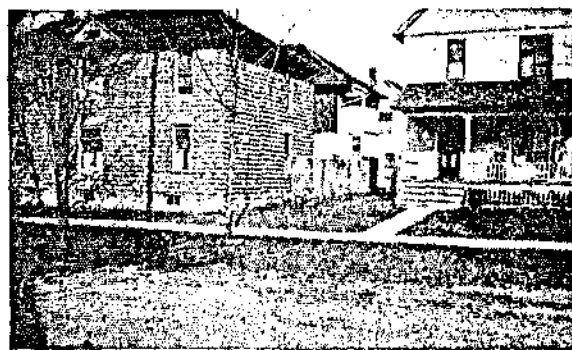
The "D" Height and Area District is designed primarily to supplement commercial and industrial uses. The height limitation is six stories, or seventy-five feet. The rear yard is limited to ten feet; side yard to five feet; the area of the lot which may be occupied is eighty per cent for interior and ninety per cent for a corner lot. In this district buildings used for residential purposes must comply with the provisions of the "C" Height and Area District.

The "E" Height and Area District is the most liberal in its provisions. Eight stories, or one hundred feet, is the maximum height to which buildings may be erected. The rear yard is limited to ten feet; side yards five feet; on the first floor buildings in this district may occupy the entire area of the lot provided the rear yard provision is complied with. Above the first floor, however, not more than ninety per cent of the corner lot, nor more than eighty per cent of the interior lot may be occupied by the building.

In adapting the provisions of the height and area districts to actual conditions, it has been found necessary to incorporate in the ordinance certain exceptions to the rigid requirements of the separate districts. These exceptions provide for the erection of public and semi-public buildings, hospitals, sanitariums, schools, etc., in the "A" and "B" Height and Area Districts; increase in height of one and two-family dwellings in the "A" Height and Area District; the erection of churches, cathedrals and temples to a height greater than that provided by the ordinance; provisions for towers, chimneys,



Illustrating the conglomerate mixture of interests which results in a city without a zone plan.



A corner house built out to the street line on each street; no side yards whatever; lot only 66 feet deep.

scenery lofts, and other such accessory structures. The area district exceptions cover conditions which cannot fully be recognized in the separate provisions of the several districts. They pertain to such matters as the area of group or row houses, the application of rear yard provisions to buildings that run from street to street, projection of cornices, projecting of fire escapes, outside stairways, and similar matters. Plate No. 29 illustrates the general nature of the Height and Area regulations.

Supplementing the more regulatory section of the zoning ordinance are certain other provisions which adapt the ordinance further to existing conditions and make its application easier and more reasonable. A close examination of the ordinance itself is recommended. It will be found, for instance, that existing uses of property are unaffected. That is, there is no intention in the zoning ordinance of disrupting conditions as they are at the time of the adoption of the ordinance. Its purpose is primarily to guide the future development of the city.

Another important provision is for the creation of a Board of Appeals. It frequently happens in the enforcement of an ordinance of this character that many border line cases arise which call for a liberal interpretation of its clauses. A Board of Appeals provides for flexibility in such instances, and makes possible a variable application of the provisions of the ordinance to meet the changing conditions of a growing city. Such a Board will effectively prevent the ordinance from becoming unduly harsh and inflexible.

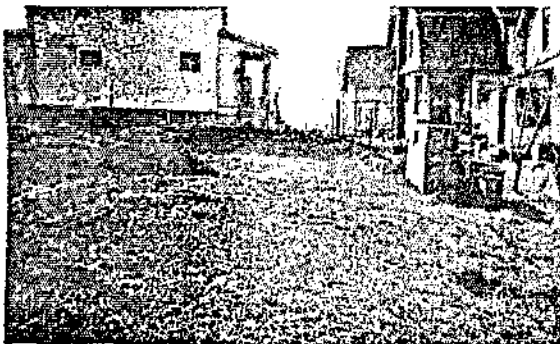
It will be observed, further, that changes in the ordinance itself may be made. It cannot be imagined that all districts as they are designated at the time of the adoption of the

ordinance and all provisions of the ordinance can remain unchanged indefinitely. In a growing city there will undoubtedly arise conditions which cannot possibly be foreseen. The zoning ordinance consequently must be so devised that it can be altered to meet new situations. Changes may be made, consequently, by the City Planning Commission of its own volition or upon petition signed by property owners. For the purpose of protecting the ordinance against whimsical changes, however, a public hearing is required and also a three-fourths vote of the City Council.

Additional provisions of this character may be enumerated but it is recommended that these be studied in the ordinance itself. The zoning ordinance as it has been prepared is in conformity with the state law, is complete and ready for adoption. It has been prepared in connection with an intimate study of the present City of Lansing and the possibilities of future growth. In its actual application after adoption it will serve to guide and direct a more orderly, more wholesome development of the entire city.

### *Application of the Zone Ordinance*

The various districts, "A" Residence, "B" Residence, Commercial, Industrial and Unrestricted reflect broadly actual conditions. Sections of the city in which residences prevail are residential, despite occasional corner stores and similar commercial or industrial irregularities. The main business section has been designated a commercial district and considerably enlarged. Certain secondary commercial districts of smaller size have likewise been established at important street intersections. The central industrial areas have been retained as "industrial" but the objectionable industries



Rear lot structures of necessity must keep company with the unhealthy surroundings of back yards.



Where it is possible for multiple-family dwellings and apartments to intrude themselves among single-family dwellings, the latter invariably suffer.



not as suitable for homes as for factories and warehouses. Consequently in the division of the city into districts these sections are designated industrial. Residences that are already there may remain and others may be erected, but persons wishing thus to use their property do so knowing the conditions which are likely to surround them in the future.

Other sections of the city, comprising higher ground, wooded tracts, predominately home neighborhoods, are made residential districts. Here a person may build a home and have assurance that nothing but homes will be built near him. In the "A" Residence District no apartments can be built, property thus classified enjoying the highest protection. A district for apartments, as well as for single and double family homes, however, is provided close to the central business section where land values dictate a more intensive use of property.

Not all attention in the zoning ordinance has been centered on the use of property. Supplementing the plan for an orderly, scientific allocation of homes, business houses, factories and the like, is another plan for further regulating the manner in which property may be improved. Even if all homes were in the right place and industries were given exclusive territory there would be no protection of human values against airless rooms, congestion, over-intensive use of land and other conditions which menace the public welfare. The use of land space in Lansing has not heretofore been wholly to the best interest of the city. Plate No. 30 will illustrate a tendency to congestion caused by (1) poor land subdivision, (2) imperfect regulation of the use of land. A phase of the zoning ordinance, therefore, aims to regulate the size and height of buildings, to define minimum amounts of open space which they must have around them and to fix definitely the number of persons who may be housed on a given area. These "height and area" regulations are closely interwoven with the "use" restrictions and the two should be considered together in examining the ordinance.

It will be found, furthermore, that the height and area provisions of the zoning ordinance are harmonized with the State Housing Code, designed and adopted several years ago to curb house building practices which were detrimental to the public interest. Housing code, building code, fire regulations and similar instruments which aim to raise the standard of

buildings and to safeguard life in the city will be supplemented and their range of influence enlarged by the zoning ordinance.

The fundamental justification of the zoning ordinance is in the object which it seeks to accomplish, the improvement of living conditions. Under our form of government each state is charged with the responsibility of looking after the health, comfort, and physical well-being of its citizens. The state consequently delegates to municipal corporations certain powers to control, regulate, even to restrict civic development in the interest of public welfare. The Michigan zoning law, under authority of which the Lansing ordinance has been prepared, is an example of such grant of power. The principle of zoning or of regulating by districts the use and development of private property holds sufficient promise of improving city life as to warrant state recognition.

In testing the merit of a particular ordinance, however, its reasonableness is the chief criterion. When a city undertakes to enforce a zone plan it invades private property rights, a field that has long had the fullest protection of courts and legislative assemblies. A man may do as he pleases with his own property; this has been a fundamental concept in our laws. As states have developed, however, they have been called upon more and more frequently to use statutory power for the regulation of private affairs. Conditions in cities particularly have made it necessary to restrict the use of certain property in the interest of the general public. The state makes no payment to a man when it forbids him to build a frame structure within the fire limits of a city;

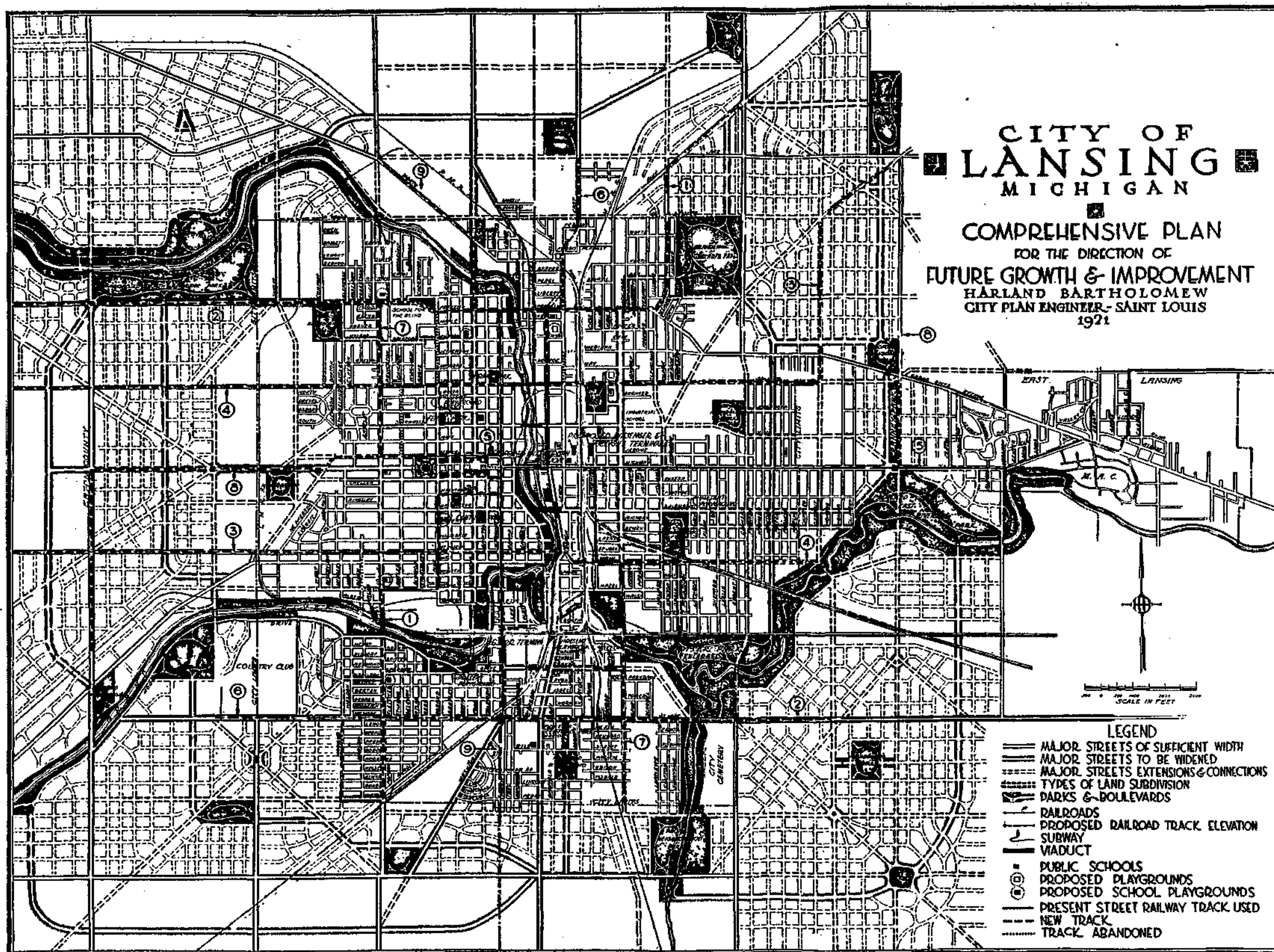


An example of what is known as the high-class apartment. Sixty families in this building must depend for fresh air and sunlight upon the streets and parks nearby.

it does not compensate the owner of a piece of property when it keeps him from using his land as a site for a slaughter house. These small sacrifices of freedom are viewed as reasonable and just, inasmuch as they are made to protect the health of the larger numbers. The state has called this power which it invokes

from time to time to interfere with a man's use of his own property the "police power." Under such power is the Lansing zone ordinance to be enforced. Its strongest support will be found in the uniformity of its provisions, its timeliness, its application to all alike, and in its reasonableness.

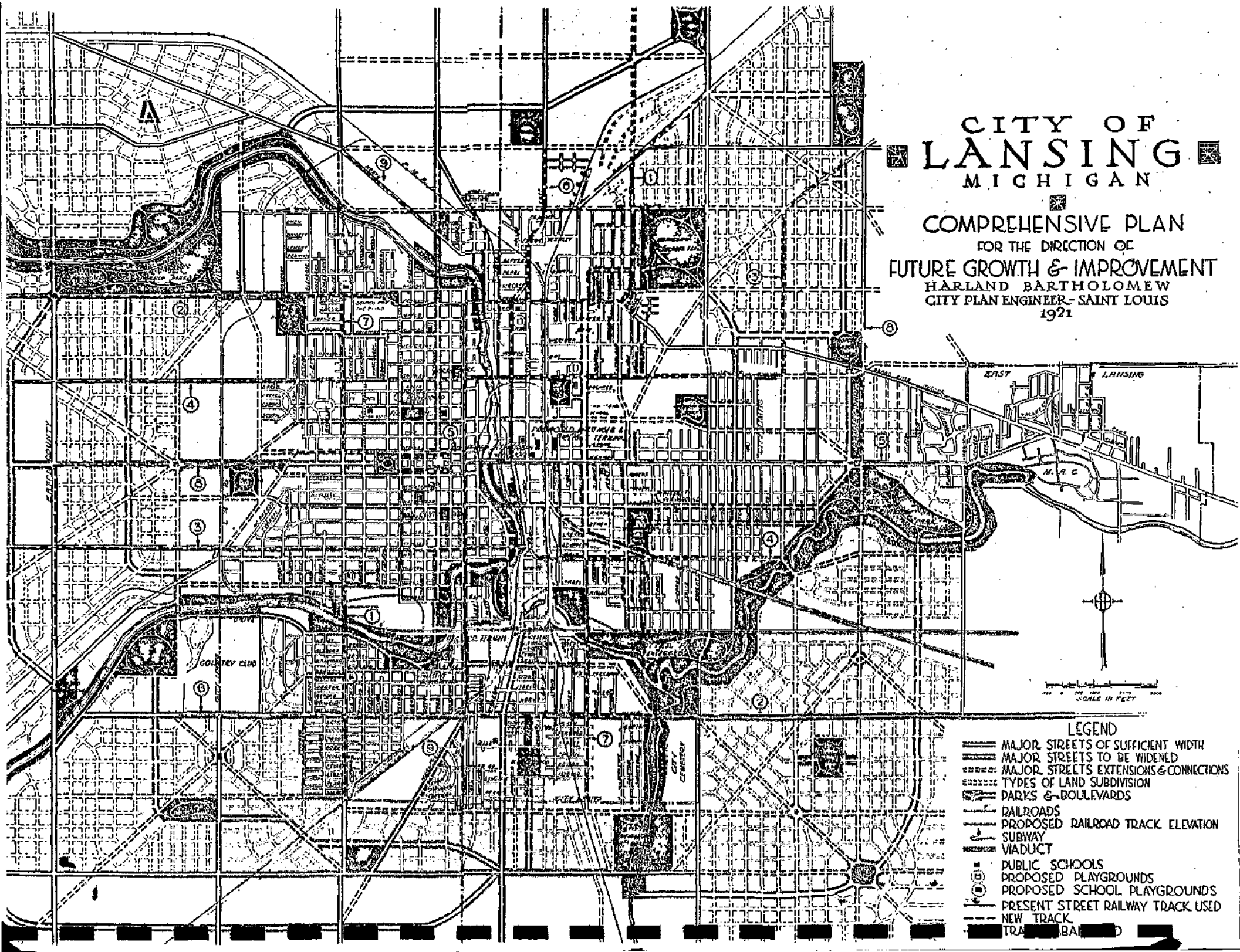






# CITY OF LANSING MICHIGAN

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FOR THE DIRECTION OF  
FUTURE GROWTH & IMPROVEMENT  
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW  
CITY PLAN ENGINEER - SAINT LOUIS  
1921



## LEGEND

- MAJOR STREETS OF SUFFICIENT WIDTH
- MAJOR STREETS TO BE WIDENED
- MAJOR STREETS EXTENSIONS & CONNECTIONS
- TYPES OF LAND SUBDIVISION
- DRIVES & BOULEVARDS
- RAILROADS
- PROPOSED RAILROAD TRACK ELEVATION
- SUBWAY
- VIADUCT
- PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- PROPOSED PLAYGROUNDS
- PROPOSED SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS
- PRESENT STREET RAILWAY TRACK USED
- NEW TRACK
- TRAFFIC BAN